



February 28, 2022

Senator Stacy Brenner, Chair  
Representative Ralph Tucker, Chair  
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

**Re: Testimony in support of LD 1979, “An Act To Sustain Good-paying Jobs in the Forest Products Industry by Ensuring Consistency between Comprehensive River Resource Management Plans and State Water Quality Standards”**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Jeremy Payne and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA). MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry. MREA members sustainably manufacture electricity from hydro, biomass, wind, tidal, and solar.

The MREA is pleased to support President Jackson’s legislation to provide an important balance between environmental regulation, legislative oversight, and the impacts regulatory decisions may have on existing renewable energy generation and related forest products industry employment.

We applaud the Governor’s focus on the financial and environmental impacts of climate change, and we agree that we must act now to pursue our clean energy transition. However, we must also be sure not to forget the many benefits existing renewables have provided, and will provide, to the grid, to their host communities through vital property tax revenues, and to other sectors through their predictably priced clean electrons.

As this committee surely knows, our electricity prices have spiked due to exploding natural gas costs, and standard offer consumers are now paying more than 80% above what they paid just last year. We must be extremely cautious with environmental regulation that may lead to the removal of clean, Maine-made hydropower – ultimately, those removals will just drive up the cost of electricity for all Maine consumers, and may in fact cause dirtier power plants to be turned on to power our homes and businesses. That is why we believe this legislature, and those that follow you, should have oversight on comprehensive river resource management plans through the requirement of major substantive rulemaking.

[www.renewablemaine.org](http://www.renewablemaine.org)

We respectfully encourage the committee to vote ought to pass.<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Payne', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jeremy N. Payne  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> All of the views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the positions of each of our members. Since MREA represents a broad spectrum of companies, we anticipate some members may submit comments of their own.