



SUMMIT UTILITIES, INC. TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 9

Kurt Adams, President & CEO

Good morning Chairman Lawrence and Chairman Berry, and esteemed members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. Thank you for your time today and for your diligent efforts to preserve some semblance of normalcy in the committee process during these trying times. I am impressed by the efforts of committee members and staff this morning despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Today I am pleased to join you to speak in support of LD 9.

My name is Kurt Adams and I am the President and CEO of Summit Utilities. Summit owns and operates Summit Natural Gas of Maine. Since coming to Maine in 2013, we have invested more than \$360 million to make clean, safe, and affordable heating solutions available to Cumberland, Falmouth, Yarmouth and the Kennebec Valley.

Our energy delivery system is essential to Maine's sustainable energy future. By converting homes, businesses and industrial customers from old, inefficient oil burning systems to highly efficient natural gas systems, Summit has reduced carbon emissions by 69,000 metric tons a year which is equivalent to taking 15,000 cars off the road annually.

Over the past few years, we have been developing a strategy to take emissions reductions even further. In 2019, we announced a voluntary renewable natural gas program. This program gives customers an opportunity to reduce their emissions by purchasing renewable natural gas. In addition, we are developing a renewable natural gas digester in central Maine, which will not only help Maine's dairy farmers, but will also produce carbon negative renewable natural gas by recycling waste derived from dairy cows – due to the lack of a market for the renewable attributes from this facility in Maine, we will be selling the renewable attributes to out-of-state buyers but will use the blue gas to warm Maine homes and power Maine business.

We are here in support of LD 9, which will allow Maine to lead on an innovative new technology to convert electric power to hydrogen. This program will not only benefit the grid by relieving pressure on it, but will also generate carbon neutral, green energy to create another avenue to decarbonize our energy system.

This pilot program would authorize up to two projects which would convert electric power to hydrogen. Molecules like hydrogen are nature's way of storing energy for long periods of time. Electrolysis, wherein hydrogen and oxygen molecules are separated from each other, is currently used to generate oxygen in our naval fleet and holds great promise as a pathway to further green our energy systems.

Last year, I mentioned that Maine was in a unique position to lead on this technology because our renewable resources are greater than our ability to transmit those resources in all hours. As renewable



electric power development has become even more successful, every means of capturing, storing and using renewable energy will be essential to meet our climate goals.

This is our opportunity to lead on a new technology, which is why a pilot is so essential to jump start investment in it.

We do have an amendment we are proposing today with the hope of making LD 9 more reflective of what was passed out of committee last year. We have socialized this language with various stakeholders prior to this hearing and taken into consideration the concerns of lawmakers, the governor's office, and stakeholders in drafting it. This new language amends the printed bill by:

- Strengthening the requirements for a pilot by adding a "public interest" criteria;
- Providing greater clarity to the PUC process by outlining an annual period for applications;
- Adding measures to allow the PUC to screen for project viability; and
- Conforming our definition of renewable energy to current statute.

To help our state continue its quest to decarbonize with green, renewable energy sources while maintaining reasonable costs for consumers I urge you to support LD 9, with its proposed amendment today. This bill offers Maine the opportunity to lead on policy and project development in a manner that is cost effective and supports solar and wind generation in Maine. I would be happy to take any questions from the Committee. Thank you.