



**Testimony in Support of LD 347
An Act To Facilitate Maine's Climate Goals by
Encouraging Use of Electric Vehicles**

February 25, 2021

Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is James Cote of Bernstein Shur and I am here today on behalf of Versant Power to testify in support of LD 347.

We want to thank Representative Grohoski for sponsoring this legislation, and reinforce that Versant Power shares her goal of encouraging the rapid adoption of electric vehicles in a way that can advance Maine's climate objectives. To that end, as we have previously mentioned, our company is currently exploring opportunities to transition our fleet of vehicles to EV's to the extent possible. We believe it is important to lead by example.

Should the committee decide to move this bill forward, we would encourage you to examine three issues:

- 1) The bill directs the Commission to solicit a single rate proposal from each transmission and distribution utility. We believe there are important differences that should be considered when designing rates for residential charging vs. commercial and public charging infrastructure. In order to meet our climate goals we will need to promote rapid adoption in both these sectors, and as such, would encourage the Committee to consider directing the Commission to solicit multiple proposals, tailored to incentivizing the deployment of both residential and public/commercial EV charging rate designs.
- 2) Locationality:
 - a. Versant Power believes that it is critical that any rate design be proposed with a specific emphasis on where this infrastructure should be located, especially in regard to commercial and public charging infrastructure. Without recognizing the capabilities of the grid in certain locations, the design could inadvertently cause unintended and unnecessary costs for electric customers. To this end, we think that including costs and benefits of locationality specifically in section 1(B) of LD 347 would be extremely valuable.
 - b. Additionally, Versant Power believes that it is important to account for the needs of consumers in both urban and rural Maine as they consider purchasing an electric vehicle and to ensure the benefits of the electrification of transportation are spread across the entire state to all utility customers. To that end, we would encourage the Committee to consider directing the Commission to consider how rate design proposals may impact benefits and obstacles to charging deployment in rural and more urban settings in each utility service territory. Ensuring that Northern and Eastern Maine are afforded the opportunity to deploy this infrastructure and share in these benefits in the same way that southern Maine is will be critical to future success.



Lastly, we would note that Versant Power would be a willing participant in any broad-based stakeholder discussions about how to best move this objective forward as an alternative option, if that is determined to be beneficial. We recognize that the legislation offers the opportunity for the Commission to reject proposals by the transmission and distribution utilities and either ask the utilities to suggest an alternative rate proposal or offer their own. For the sake of efficiency, if it is deemed more valuable for us to participate in a process or docket in advance of offering a proposed rate schedule with a goal of identifying a consensus-based approach, we would be more than happy to do so.

Thank you for your consideration, and we would be pleased to provide any information that would be helpful for the work session.