The Nature Conservancy
Maine

Testimony before the

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

By Rob Wood, Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy

February 25, 2021

Re: LD 347 – An Act To Facilitate Maine's Climate Goals by Encouraging Use of Electric Vehicles

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Rob Wood and I am the Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to testify **in support of LD 347**, An Act To Facilitate Maine's Climate Goals by Encouraging Use of Electric Vehicles.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. We have been working in Maine for more than 60 years with a focus on protecting land, restoring rivers and streams, rebuilding groundfish populations in the Gulf of Maine and developing innovative solutions to address climate change.

Maine's new four-year state Climate Action Plan emphasizes the importance of addressing carbon pollution from the transportation sector, which accounts for more than half of Maine's carbon emissions from fossil fuel use. I was honored to serve on the Transportation Working Group of the Maine Climate Council and to now serve as the co-chair of the Working Group. Our Working Group recommended transportation electrification as a key strategy for the Climate Action Plan, based on modeling results showing that under every scenario, helping Mainers transition to electric vehicles (EVs) will be key to meeting the State's emissions reduction targets.

There are a variety of policy levers that can be pulled to incentivize EV adoption. Policies that support development of EV charging infrastructure are among the most important, because the research is clear that even if a consumer would consider purchasing a new or used EV, they continue to be concerned about lack of access to charging. The Nature Conservancy conducted a statewide poll of Mainers last year, and we found that next to the upfront cost of an EV, uncertainty about access to charging was the most oft-cited reason not to switch to an EV.

LD 347 would seek to address this barrier by supporting deployment of EV charging stations through rate design. The bill provides flexibility to utilities to design and propose rates to incentivize EV charging stations, although it is likely that those rates would address demand charges, which can create significant costs for DC fast charging stations in particular.

CMP is currently undertaking a DC fast charging rate pilot, enabled by beneficial electrification legislation previously passed by this Committee. We encourage the data from that pilot to be used to inform future rate designs contemplated by LD 347, but we are also encouraged that LD 347 would accelerate implementation of fully fledged EV charging station incentive rates statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.