

Senator Lawrence, Rep. Berry and members of the EUT Committee:

My name is John Ferland and I am president of Ocean Renewable Power Company (ORPC). I am speaking today in favor of the energy storage bill, particularly its call for pilot projects, as this will help advance a compelling opportunity in Washington County: The Eastport Smart Microgrid Project, a partnership initiative of ORPC, the City of Eastport, Versant Power and the Island Institute.

ORPC develops underwater power systems that generate electricity from tidal and river currents without use of dams or impoundments. We are based in Portland, with a marine operations center in Eastport and an engineering and electronics laboratory in Brunswick. We have 18-Maine based employees.

ORPC's power systems are designed, developed, tested and currently under assembly in Maine and are in high demand internationally. Our RivGen® Power System is the longest operating river current device in North America, paired with storage and providing baseload power to a remote Alaskan village. We have similar efforts underway elsewhere in Alaska, and in Canada and Chile.

Our success internationally is directly related to our ability to develop and test our power systems in Maine, facilitated through the Ocean Energy Act of 2010. As a result of the Act, the Maine PUC granted ORPC an up to 5 MW allocation of tidal energy generation, which led to a 20-year power purchase agreement with Versant Power. Uniquely, the PPA was designed as an economic development tool: it requires establishment of a Maine-based ocean energy industry with an in-state supply chain, host community partnerships and R&D participation by the university system. These benefits are in place, and An Act to Advance Energy Storage in Maine will help deepen their positive impact on the Washington County economy.

As ORPC pursues its Western Passage Tidal Energy Project in Eastport over the next five years, we will work with the community, utility and non-profit partners on the microgrid project whereby ORPC's tidal energy devices, paired with an energy storage system, will provide predictable baseload power to the grid and increase resiliency for a region of Maine historically at the end of the line. The Eastport Smart Microgrid Project would operate seamlessly with the Versant regional grid, and would replace a former diesel fuel backup substation and reduce the need to spend unnecessarily on pole and wire corridors.

This collaborative initiative will create a compelling pilot project envisioned by the energy storage act and over the long term implement all components of the State's climate action and clean energy economy plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I look forward to your questions and discussion as you deliberate on this bill.