



March 18, 2021

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Seth Berry, Chair
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in support of LD 597, “An Act To Establish the Wood Energy Investment Program”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology 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.

Two years ago, we were pleased to play a minor role in helping to bring forward LD 1494, “An Act to Reform Maine’s Renewable Portfolio Standard” (RPS) as sponsored by Senator Vitelli. As you know, LD 1494 helped reform our clean energy policies, but also created a new thermal Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) program to recognize the environmental and economic value of thermal energy projects.

In the 129th Legislature, MREA supported the predecessor to this bill, LD 912 (also sponsored by Senate President Jackson) as a meaningful path to supporting the renewable values of wood energy. This sector provides valuable, long-term employment in many rural areas of the state and also helps to displace fossil fuels.

LD 597 will stimulate the development of new, smaller scale projects to help move the state more toward energy independence. The legislation will provide critical funding for the Wood Energy Investment Program by allocating any available funds created through the Alternative Compliance Payment associated with the thermal REC program. The ACP effectively functions as a price cap to ensure any potential thermal REC supply shortages do not create unreasonable price increases.

We respectfully encourage the committee to vote ought to pass.¹

¹ 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Jeremy N. Payne
Executive Director