

May 11, 2021

Testimony submitted to the State of Maine Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

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In favor of: *LD 1682, An Act To Require Consideration of Climate and Equity Impacts by the Public Utilities Commission*

For public hearing scheduled May 12, 2021

I am submitting this testimony as an individual citizen. Other than as a consumer of public utilities, I have no business or other interest in Maine's regulated utilities. However, we all should share an interest in stimulating effective and equitable responses to the challenge of climate change.

Maine's Climate Action Plan provides a broad roadmap to reduce and even reverse damage to our ecosystem and do it in such a manner as to reflect our priorities with respect to jobs, health, health, and equity. But for this plan to work the various elements of state government need to be aligned in support of these priorities. In particular, the Public Utilities Commission could be a powerful positive force in this effort, but its outdated mission prevents it from doing so.

The good news is that the Public Utilities Commission has competent and committed staff, and they have proven highly effective at achieving its mission. And in the past its mission was generally considered appropriate for the public's needs, which included balancing issues of safety, reliability, and economics. But the public's needs are broader now, and we need to consider costs and benefits more broadly than in the past. We need to also consider climate, equity, and environmental justice. LD 1682 would broaden the PUC's mission and empower the PUC's people to more completely address the public's need, as reflected in the Climate Action Plan.

In short, broadening the authority of the PUC is critical to the success of the Climate Action Plan, and I strongly recommend your support of LD 1682.