

May 20, 2021

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 1708 – An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit Utility, To Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is Jennifer Armstrong, I reside in Kennebunkport, Maine, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1708 – An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company.

Living in Kennebunk, and owning and operating my business in Kennebunkport has afforded me the unique perspective of personally experiencing the difference of working with our Consumer Owned Utility in Kennebunk, and CMP's corporate owned utility in Kennebunkport.

I have always been amazed by the vast difference these two entities have on everyday people like myself. The consumer rate disparity and reliability are the main two things that stand out to me. For towns that are essentially in the same location, one would think that the rates of electricity would be almost identical- not the case. CMP rates are significantly more. Not only are CMP rates higher on the consumer, while funneling those profits out-of-state, the reliability is undependable. When the community of Kennebunkport has an outage, the amount of time it takes to restore power, is significantly longer than that of neighboring Kennebunk.

Another benefit of having a Consumer Owned Utility in Maine is that you actually know the people running the company. Kennebunk Light and Power has been serving the people of our community since 1893! A sure sign that Pine Tree Power Company is a more than viable concept for the people of Maine.

As we all work towards a future of non-reliance on fossil fuels, to abate the Climate Crisis, a reliable, updated electrical grid is a necessity. This bill would do just that. The Pine Tree Power Company would execute this WITHOUT passing on the costs in the form of increased rates for the consumer. Pine Tree Power will enhance and encourage clean and green energy in Maine, while CMP and Versant have worked diligently to STOP the implementation and growth of renewable energy in Maine.

Our state is in dire need of reliable broadband in ALL of our communities. Pole attachment costs are one of the biggest barriers to executing this. A community owned utility, with the interests of Mainers at the core of its mission, will make this a priority, and make this much needed service accessible to all Mainers!

I urge you to support this vital piece of legislation for the well being, and brighter, cleaner, greener future for Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Armstrong
Kennebunkport, ME