

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

My name is Nicole Batchelder. I reside in Leeds, Maine. I am here to testify in support of An Act to create Pine Tree Power Company. Back in 2010 I dedicated over a year of my weekends to building a home in the rural part of Maine to safely raise my children in. However, since roughly October of 2017 I have watched my electricity bill more than double, and recently double again with no explanation from Central Maine Power, despite there being no changes in my family's consumption. Actually, my entire family has continued to be more cautious of not using electricity since. I have done everything in my power to get to the bottom of these issues and have been offered no help from Central Maine Power aside from them changing the meter on my home, which fixed nothing. Along with Central Maine Power the Maine Public Utilities Commission continues to stand behind Central Maine Power and leaves us Mainers to fend for ourselves up against this giant monopoly. It doesn't end with the costs of electricity either. The customer service provided by Central Maine Power AND reliability have failed to meet reasonable standards time and time again, as such national studies have proven.

If the last few years continue to repeat themselves and my family's future continues to be at the mercy of Central Maine Power, I will soon have to sell my children's home and relocate to where the cost of electricity isn't almost as much as my mortgage. My children will lose the home and community they've known all of their lives and my livelihood as a single mother will have been taken from me to satisfy a corporation that simply doesn't care. There is a huge disconnect between Central Maine Power and the people of Maine. Other states that have created a consumer owned utility have had much success and it is clear the best for Maine's people too. This utility will not just save the people money but it will reinvest in the communities and infrastructure by also cutting costs to get broadband internet to rural communities such as mine.

I urge the Committee to take a look at all of the evidence provided and join us in supporting Pine Tree Power! And a special thank you to the members for their time and hard work!

Sincerely,

Nicole Batchelder