

To: Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

From: Josh Blaisdell

Date: 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

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology: My name is Josh Blaisdell, I am a small-scale developer in the Midcoast area. I have built and renovated homes for Mainers and hope to be able to provide nice and affordable housing. I am working to keep costs and negative environmental impacts low without sacrificing quality, such as using hardwood floors and siding, or metal roofs that can support solar. However, one cost and hassle that slows down this process is CMP. Because they are a large corporation with far from local ownership, every step to connect new houses to the grid is long and expensive. CMP is ineffective at communicating, frequently makes errors on new service requests, and often overcharge for the new service requests. If our utility was consumer owned instead of investor owned, I would not be overcharged to profit foreign shareholders; instead I would pay the true cost and be able to pass on those savings to make the homes I develop more affordable. While the individual employees are always pleasant and try to be helpful, they seem mired in bureaucracy. These employees will be able to keep their jobs, but much of the bureaucracy of being a large investor owned company will disappear. I would be able to develop more affordable housing with a consumer-owned utility.

Furthermore, I would like to see local control of Maine's grid. I am an independent voter and believe that decisions should be made on a local, case by case basis. Those in Spain and Canada don't know what's best for Maine; we do. I hope to see local control of our grid in the future.

I also care deeply about the environment and have worked to minimize my own carbon footprint by installing solar panels on my own home, buying electric cars, and purchasing renewable energy credits. Investor owned utilities like CMP are working to inhibit progress on renewable energy in the name of the bottom line. To reach our renewable energy goals, our power grid needs to be locally controlled and the profits invested back into energy, not sent to foreign entities.

I hope to provide housing for Mainers that is high quality, affordable, reliable, and green. The Pine Tree Power Company will help me accomplish these goals. Because of this, I urge you to support LD 1708. Respectfully,

Josh Blaisdell

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