

Celeste Carey
Newcastle

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May 19, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of H.P.1269, L.D. 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"

Senate Chair Lawrence, House Chair Berry, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

I am a Maine citizen in support of LD 1708, our second chance to have a state-level, consumer-owned utility (COU). Representative Berry, cosponsors Senator Bennett and Representatives Carlow, Grohoski, Newell, and Poirier, Senators Brenner, President Jackson, and Woodsome, thank you all very much for bringing this bill forward.

Now that we have a climate plan with a calendar we need utilities better than CMP and Versant to match it. Customer experience related to billing and sometimes reliability with CMP have been poor, with a J.D. Power ranking of lowest customer satisfaction in the nation in 2019. And our solar developers holding interconnection contracts with CMP were informed early this year to expect new, much more expensive bills to complete those project connections to the grid. The numbers are coming back down to a degree, but we need a utility that does not pit itself against our Maine businesses, including our new renewable businesses, which CMP does not seem to appreciate.

I think we would do better with our own COU, where grid planning included local renewable energy, storage, and consideration of our natural resources. Tom Saviello, former representative and senator and Senator Brownie Carson have noted CMP's lack of commitment to clean, renewable energy time and time again. In the Maine Beacon article by Nick Fuller Googins dated December 9, 2019, "CMP pulls web page after incorrectly claiming environmental groups back corridor," you can read the legislators' quotes along with Representative Seth Berry's. Very long-distance electric transmission lines are now being developed for a need Maine does not have. It is damaging our environment, the forest, and the wetlands and endangering species. Don't we want to stop this from ever happening again?

No matter what CMP does this year - with the creation of our own COU - we can lower Maine customer rates, provide more reliable power, happily transition to green energy for ourselves and the planet, and ultimately keep billions of dollars in Maine.

What are we waiting for? Please pass this act and permit the Maine voters of the State to vote on the creation of the Pine Tree Power Company.

Thank you for your time.

Celeste Carey