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Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, thank you for allowing me to comment in support of LD 1708: An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company. My name is Margaret Carroll, and I am writing from Kennebunkport, Maine. I appreciate you all taking the time to hear and process this testimony, and thank you for the opportunity to discuss the advantages that consumer-owned power offers Maine!

Growing up, I always assumed that power outages were a normal and expected part of life. At least once a winter, my family would lose power for days at a time, and have been required to leave our house on multiple occasions. Luckily, having grown up with friends in Kennebunk, with a more reliable power grid, my siblings and I have had safe and warm places to spend a night before school the next morning. Many people in my area have been able to purchase gas generators in order to stay in their homes through the entire winter, but this does not solve the problem. Not only do these generators impose huge start-up costs on the consumer, but also their use is bad for the environment.

Legislation will tackle this issue in a few ways. First, by establishing a more reliable power source with greater consumer buy-in, neighborhoods will be able to avoid the complicated investment in alternative, nonrenewable generators. These are a stop-gap fix which prioritize richer residents and systematically disadvantage Mainers that cannot access these expensive remedies. Further, investing in consumer-owned utility is important because it will protect the future of all Mainers by investing in renewable sources of energy. CMP and Versant have dragged their feet on such investments, and a COU could turn the tide and speed the integration of low-cost, green power into our grid.

I am supporting An Act to Create the Pine tree Power Company because it will replace CMP and Versant with a more reliable, more cost-effective, and sustainable power source that protects, rather than threatens Maine futures. Thank you for reading my testimony!