

5/20/21

To: Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

From: Jess Cooper, Norway, ME

Re: 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 OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Jess Cooper. I am a resident of Norway, a youth climate activist, and I'm here to use art and spoken word poetry to urge you to support LD 1708.

"Our Power"

When we listen to the wisdom of the indigenous peoples of this land, we are reminded of
the ways that we can work hand-in-hand,
With nature, each other, our friends and neighbors close by,
And from the youth to our elders across the state we are asking why, why is it
That we've turned a blind eye
to how disconnected our connection is to the grid on which we all rely?
Transmission lines lace the sky
And hum with power and a reminder
That this energy doesn't necessarily come from nearby.

When we pay more for something we all use,
To the profit and into the pockets of companies overseen overseas,
We lose
And so much more than just money.
We can choose a consumer-owned utility
And relabel ourselves as a community powered on resiliency
With *our power* we can break free from an outdated system that we no longer need,
One that feeds the greed that squeezes every dollar from folks like you and like me
Just trying to make ends meet, and our planet a better place to be.

Until you've had your lights shut off,
Because the cost was just too much
You can't imagine choosing between paying for your bills or for your child's lunch.

So what do we do?

Well, this idea isn't new

A COU?

A utility, a useful thing that's used and owned by you,

The consumer,

The member,

And the owner too.

Here's your chance to stand in your power, to stand up and choose

A clean energy future, shining a light for the way through

To Maine's liberation from for-profit utilities, long overdue.

It will require all of us from York to Oxford to Piscataquis

To tell our stories,

to build back better, and with equity.

We're here today calling on the 16 counties,

To join together to make ripples and waves

Sending fresh energy to every part of the state,

Our Governor has told us that "Maine can't wait"

So as a mother, youth activist, and concerned citizen,

I'm urging you now to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1708.

Thank you,

Jess Cooper

Norway, ME