

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: May 17, 2021

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 Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Program Manager for Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate and ecological emergency. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero-carbon emissions by 2030 and demand the equitable implementation of clean renewable energy, ecological land-use practices, and bold community-led action for a more resilient Maine. I write to you today in support of LD 1708.

Maine must urgently and boldly address the climate crisis and reach a zero-carbon economy by 2030. To enable Maine to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets we need to electrify. Our energy future being mapped by our state Climate Action Plan will depend on electricity and the electrical grid more than it does today. We must substitute renewable electricity for heating oil, gasoline, and other fossil fuels. Converting much of our heating and transportation to electricity will at least triple our need for power from our poles and wires, the grid. To carry that load, our grid will need serious investments. This is key to Maine's energy future.

Currently our network is owned by, international, private utility monopolies, with the primary goal of profits for their shareholders. We need the billions of dollars that are currently pouring out of state to foreign entities, and through our heavy reliance on fossil fuels for heating and transportation, to be reinvested in our electrical grid as it is the foundation of climate action. The grid is the backbone; adding distributed generation and microgrids which will lower costs of expansion and increase energy security and reliability.

CMP and Versant, both foreign owned companies, have inhibited progress to a renewable energy future. This bill creates a consumer owned utility, the Pine Tree Power Company, which could lead the way to a rapid, just transition to a clean renewable energy future.

Maine people need a utility we can afford, a utility we can depend on, a utility willing to work with distributed energy generators rather than trying to block them, and a utility that supports rather than opposes meaningful and bold climate policies. We need to change the systems and the way we have been doing things, like investor owned utilities heeding to a 19th century model of transmission and distribution, in order to thrive and survive. Maine needs a consumer owned utility now.

We offer our full support for this legislation. Please vote LD 1708 OUGHT TO PASS for our futures. Thank you.

maineclimateaction.org

contact: maineclimateaction@gmail.com

Amy Eshoo
Maine Climate Action Now

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