

Testimony to the EUT Committee of the Maine Legislature Regarding LD 1708

Dear EUT Committee:

I've been in Maine since 1998 raising a family and running a web development business in Camden. I'd like to briefly share my perspective on LD 1708.

Although you're considering a lot of important bills this session LD 1708 may arguably offer the most substantial long-term benefit to the most Mainers. Not only will CMP and Versant residential and business ratepayers save as much as \$9 billion over the next 3 decades, they'll also enjoy much better service and reliability.

LD 1708 is also the key to addressing climate change by allowing Mainers to take charge of modernizing our aging grid and encouraging clean power. CMP and Versant are focussed on quarterly returns, not long-term investments that benefit future generations.

I could list many more benefits of LD 1708 but I'm sure you've heard them several times over from various proponents. So let me just finish with my personal experience.

I've been a CMP customer for 22 years now. They were a tolerable company to deal with in 1999 when I first opened my account but since the takeover by Iberdrola several years back that's all changed. My bills have increased dramatically while service has declined. CMP now runs roughshod over its customers with virtual impunity as the ongoing 3-year-old billing fiasco demonstrates. I've been wrangling with their customer service over inflated bills since 2018, even after enlisting the help of the Public Advocate. The PUC is obviously unwilling or unable to hold CMP to account—CMP brushes off the occasional fines and wrist-slaps from the PUC as just the cost of doing business.

The monopoly franchise with guaranteed profit that Maine gives to utility companies isn't a permanent right, it's a privilege granted by the State contingent upon delivering reliable service and dealing honestly with customers. CMP regularly abuses that privilege. Since they're not holding up their end of the bargain, it's time to revoke the franchise they've been granted. Versant may not behave as egregiously as CMP but they still charge their customers more for less in return than the Maine's existing consumer-owned utilities.

Please bring LD 1708 to the full Legislature this session, including the provision calling for a statewide referendum this November.

Thanks for your time and thanks to each of you for your public service.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at 236-6200 or edgeis@roadrunner.com.

Sincerely,

Ed Geis

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