

Audrey Hufnagel
Damariscotta

To: Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

From: Audrey Hufnagel

Date: May 20, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of 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

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and Members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Audrey Hufnagel and I am writing as a student and an activist in support of 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.

I am a fifteen year old climate activist and I have lived in Maine my whole life, so I care a lot about Maine. The source, delivery and control of energy in Maine is an important factor in our state's response to climate change. LD 1708 would shift the control of Maine's energy sector and make our state better able to make the transition to clean energy.

Companies like Central Maine Power and Versant have been charging Mainer's high prices for electricity, but with poor results. They have both received low consumer approval rates. These companies care only about profit for themselves and their shareholders and do not have consumer interests at heart.

An example of the way that CMP doesn't care about their customer's interests is the CMP corridor. The CMP corridor will cut a 145 mile corridor through the Maine woods and CMP has continued this project despite the fact that a majority of Mainer's are opposed. This shows CMP's disregard for the environment and people of Maine. The Pine Tree Power Company provides an alternative to this.

The Pine Tree Power Company will be controlled by people who have a connection to Maine and care about the interests of residents, whereas Maine's investor owned utilities are owned by foreign companies. In the Pine Tree Power Company, everyone has the opportunity to have a say in the decisions made through public meetings, which will shift the power back to Maine. Additionally, having a consumer owned utility will reduce costs for consumers in Maine and help expand affordable broadband access, something that is even more necessary today than ever before due to the pandemic.

As a climate activist, one of the most important parts of this bill to me is that having a consumer owned utility will help Maine transition to clean and renewable forms of energy. The effects of climate change are already impacting our state. By 2030, nine years from now, we will reach a point where the levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere will become irreversible and we will face catastrophic climate disaster as early as 2040. That is why Maine needs to make the transition to clean energy as soon as possible.

The creation of the Pine Tree Power Company through LD 1708 will give Mainer's control over their energy instead of foreign owned companies like CMP and Versant. It will lower rates for customers and help Maine transition to clean energy. Consumer owned utilities have been successful in these things before in many parts of the country, and Maine needs a consumer owned utility as well. That is why I urge you to pass LD 1708.

Respectfully,
Audrey Hufnagel