

Senator Mark Lawrence, Representative Seth Berry and Honorable Members of the Committee On Energy, Utilities and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Patty Kidder and I live in the village of Springvale located in the city of Sanford. I am here in support of LD 1708: An Act To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Non-Profit Utility, To Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence.

I am a Unitarian Universalist and we believe in the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part. We believe we must be good stewards of our planet, Earth and therefore we support Maine's goal of a zero-carbon economy by 2045. We know the only way we will accomplish this is by converting our heating and transportation to renewable electricity which is going to require a much stronger grid and that concerns me. I am concerned that CMP will let us down in service and raise our rates sky high. That's what has happened in the past and I have been a CMP customer for over 40 years. It's their M.O. and I don't believe they are going to change now.

But we can change! Passing LD 1708 would create Pine Tree Power Company, a non-profit utility, that would help to keep our rates as low as possible. It would put Maine people in control of the grid for our state instead of being held hostage by a foreign owned for profit company more concerned with pleasing stock holders and CEO bonuses. I know I would feel more secure about our future energy needs if we owned the grid: if it was our responsibility to improve, maintain and protect it. I trust Maine people to reinvest in Maine's power delivery system to fill our future needs. I don't trust CMP to do the same.

Our storms, year round have been becoming more severe with downed trees and limbs causing more and more power outages. After these big storms CMP and Versant charge their customers to repair the damage. If we had a COU, it would receive federal help to offset the expense.

Pine Tree Power will match what CMP or Versant is paying our municipalities, the workers will keep their jobs, contacts, seniority, and pensions and we will be secure knowing we control our renewable electricity needs for the foreseeable future. Pine Tree Power will cut the costs of pole access and remove the delays for Internet providers so that rural Maine will finally have affordable access to broadband. For these reasons and more, I ask you to please vote "ought to pass" on LD 1708. Thank you for your time.

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