

Mason Marriott-Voss
North Berwick

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Mason Marriott-Voss and I am calling in from North Berwick Maine. Thank you for allowing me to speak 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 farm worker from Texas, and I can assure you that investor-owned utilities will fail when you need them most. During the winter storm that ravaged the South back in February of this year, the bottom fell out of the Texas power grid as cheap, old, and barely functioning infrastructure predictably failed. This left more than 4 million without power for days at a time, at temperatures as low as -2. Of course, Maine's grid is more prepared for that kind of winter weather, but heat waves, hurricanes, wildfires, and more destructive storms will continue to become the norm as global warming causes the weather to become increasingly unpredictable and intense.

Because CMP and Versant are interested in cutting costs and protecting their bottom line before actually providing services, they will never be able to be prepared for the worst of what mother nature has to offer. All of the reliability struggles we've heard so much about today can, and will, only get worse. It doesn't matter how many reports or recommendations or reviews are constructed, it is never in their interest to make necessary investments to protect Maine from the epistemic challenges headed our way. A consumer owned utility is essential to ensure that money is spent only on things people need. A COU will provide Maine with more reliable power because its mission is to serve Mainers, not maximize profits for absentee owners by skimping on infrastructure.

I am in support of LD 1708 because it would put the people first and ensure the grid stays running when Mainers need it the most. CMP and Versant have failed to do the bare minimum in the past, what makes us think they will rise to the challenges of the future? Thank you for listening to my testimony today, I am ready to answer any questions that you might have.