



May 20, 2021

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Seth Berry, Chair
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony Neither For Nor Against 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, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Jeremy Payne and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA). MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry. MREA members sustainably manufacture electricity from hydro, biomass, wind, tidal, and solar.

The MREA testifies neither for nor against LD 1708 – we know the sponsor of this bill has worked tirelessly to move the state toward a lower cost, higher reliability, and cleaner energy future. We agree these must be guiding principles as we pursue the priorities contained within the Climate Action Plan, in addition to other critical areas of existing law.

Over many years – and especially in recent months – we have expressed our deep concern about utility missteps, and the very recent issues related to interconnecting solar projects. These concerns are real, they are harmful to our pursuit of a cost-effective clean energy future, and we believe no matter what happens with LD 1708 those issues require immediate attention. We are encouraged the Public Utilities Commission has saw fit to examine many of those issues in a variety of different dockets.

Were LD 1708 to become law, we do wonder how long this issue would remain in dispute in the judicial system. As we have frequently testified over the years, uncertainty is the enemy of investment.

Lastly, if the committee decides to endorse LD 1708, we would respectfully request explicit language be added to the bill mandating that all agreements, contracts, and the like will be honored by the Pine Tree Power Company, or its successor.

www.renewablemaine.org

Thank you for your time and consideration.¹

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Payne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeremy N. Payne
Executive Director

¹ All of the views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the positions of each of our members. Since MREA represents a broad spectrum of companies, we anticipate some members may submit comments of their own.