



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

## Jennifer L. Poirier

78 Palmer Road  
Skowhegan, ME 04976  
Cell Phone: (207) 399-9784  
Jennifer.Poirier@legislature.maine.gov

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*Testimony of Rep. Jennifer Poirier presenting  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and  
Technology*

*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 Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is Jennifer Poirier. I live in Skowhegan and represent the good people of District 107, which is all of Skowhegan and part of Madison.

I am proud to co-sponsor 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,**" working collaboratively with legislators of both parties.

Hundreds of Mainers are still struggling to pay their electric bills from over a year ago and they have not yet received any real explanation for why their power bills skyrocketed from under \$100 per month to upwards of \$400 or more.

Things have gotten worse, much worse, since foreign owners took over CMP and Versant. CMP is now owned by Avangrid, and Avangrid is now largely owned and controlled by Spanish utility giant Iberdrola. Iberdrola is largely owned by three foreign governments: the banks of Qatar, Norway, and Spain. The government of Qatar, is the largest of these investors.

Versant, Maine's other for-profit monopoly utility, is 100% owned by ENMAX, which is

100% owned by the government of the City of Calgary, Canada.

Whatever happened to local control? It has become obvious to me that it is a bad idea to rely on these foreign-owned companies to control our electricity system. These profit-driven utilities are just not designed to serve Maine people and businesses. They do not help us thrive nor look out for our future needs.

These utilities have broken many promises. CMP recently claimed that its number one priority was to provide better customer service to regain our trust. It is not getting better!

Maine's profit-driven utilities - CMP and Versant - both rank dead last - for customer satisfaction, according to J.D. Power's 2020 utility customer satisfaction survey. They rank near the top in terms of high prices.

Maine deserves a better utility and Pine Tree Power Company has been designed to provide one. Imagine a utility serving Maine and Maine alone that listens to Maine people and serves us well. That's Pine Tree Power Company. It will answer to its Maine customers, not distant stockholders and investors. It will be made up of our neighbors and managed by Maine people we elect, not muckety mucks in boardrooms far away. It will qualify for low-interest bonds to improve the reliability of our power supply and will not use a single tax dollar. It will be owned by the people of Maine, not any government. It will invest its earnings back into Maine instead of sending them away to shareholders.

What is the number one job of an electric utility? Delivering electricity reliably. It's time to face facts: CMP and Versant, the investor-owned utilities that are supposed to manage our power lines and poles have failed us. Maine ranks last -- dead last in the whole country -- for electricity reliability. The most outages and the second longest outages too.

- We need and deserve an electric utility like Pine Tree Power that is 100% focused on making our electric system reliable now and making plans to keep it reliable into the future.
- We need and deserve an electric utility like Pine Tree Power that is 100% focused on serving Maine ratepayers as its customers.
- We need and deserve a utility like Pine Tree Power that plows income back to improve our grid and reliability and reduce rates, instead of draining money out of our economy.
- We need and deserve a utility like Pine Tree Power that can qualify for low interest bonding to accomplish all this, instead of passing along its expensive bond rates to us.
- We need and deserve a utility like Pine Tree Power that qualifies for FEMA aid when major storms strike, instead of passing storm damage clean up costs along to us ratepayers.

I have lived in Maine my entire life and with my husband raised our seven sons here.

I firmly believe Maine citizens need and deserve an electric utility like Pine Tree Power

Company and should have the right to vote on it.

Electricity is a basic, vital need to power our homes and businesses. I urge you to support LD 1708 and the Pine Tree Power Company, so future generations of Mainers will be well-served.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Jennifer Poirier  
Maine House District 107  
78 Palmer Road  
Skowhegan, Maine 04976  
(207)399-9784