

Grant Provost  
Brunswick

Good Morning Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Grant Provost, I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7 and I rise in favor of LD 1708 An Act to Create the Pine Tree Company, a Nonprofit Utility, to Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence.

When I was a kid every night on public access at least once I would see the same commercial with the famous quote "no power line is safe to touch ever". A thick Maine accent for a Maine utility, the Maine part is baked right into the name of the power company. I felt like the guy lived around the corner from me. Those days are gone but it doesn't have to be for good. Our power company is no longer ours, Mainers electrical bills are lining the pockets of a multi-national conglomerate. With this bill we can start making sure Mainers hard earned money stays in Maine and helps a company that Mainers have a say in. When Mainers have their say the rates will come down and the service will improve. It is part of the whole non-profit thing, money flows into running the business and everything above and beyond goes into infrastructure or back to the rate payers. Back into Mainers pockets in savings, not a cooperate board on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. When the money above operating costs are reinvested into infrastructure the reliability of the grid improves as the rate payers make timely improvements instead of waiting for failure. Or simply the cash flows into rate payer's pockets. Either situation is good for Mainers trying to make every dollar count.

With the transition away from fossil fuels a Mainer run utility can put Mainers first in all aspects. When Mainers own their own energy independence, they hire local, pay well and do not sub work to companies from Mississippi, who bring an out of state workforce to undercut wages while not hiring locally. When there is no cooperate planes or high CEO salaries to pour profits into rate payers save. Let's not forget the fact that when Mainers own there own power they don't have to worry about who is going to purchase their power company next. Monsanto was purchased by a German company who in order to satisfy regulators started selling assets that were quickly purchased by Chinese government owned corporations. These people do not care about Mainers, they care about money. How horrible would it be to see our at one time local company sold by the Spaniards to the Chinese for the sole reason of satisfy regulators in a merger of massive international corporations. That doesn't happen when Mainers run the show and that is what this bill is about.

At this moment we have an unprecedented obligation to use this transition in a way that will benefit Mainers for generations to come. In the next few years Mainers will decide what that transition from fossil fuels to a more electric future looks like. With heat pumps soon to be in nearly every home, wind and solar at multi-megawatt capacities, Mainers need to control the narrative. If we don't Maine's working families are going be pushed aside in the name of corporate profits. In an almost completely electric future large utility corporations become larger and more powerful. In no way does that benefit Mainers This is one of the many reasons I urge this committee to vote ought to pass on this piece of legislation.