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Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Senator Lawrence
Representative Berry
Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Thursday, May 20th, 2021

Support for 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 Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology: My name is Emily Rochford, I reside in Burnham, Maine, and I am here to testify on behalf of the Maine Youth for Climate Justice coalition in support of An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company.

Youth represent only 20 percent of the total population, yet are 100 percent of the future. The decisions you are making today regarding LD 1708 have immensely powerful implications for the future and can be a pivotal point towards a sustainable and resilient Maine for generations to come. A 100% renewable energy future is not possible without a consumer-owned utility. Every community in the United States that has achieved this goal is powered by a consumer-owned utility. Other consumer-owned utilities throughout the U.S. are also decades ahead of Maine in their goals to establish a 100% renewable energy grid. Sustaining an energy grid that can reliably and consistently provide power to the state on a long-term basis cannot be reliant on an outdated and dying industry and its allies. The most concrete answer to effectively eliminate fossil fuel-based energy in a timely manner is through the passing of LD 1708.

While achieving climate goals and a reliable energy grid to sustain Maine's future are direct benefits of a consumer-owned utility, the values and implications of energy justice for the people of Maine are also expressed in this bill. Affordable electricity is a necessity for access to heating, shelter, and now more than ever, jobs for the people of Maine. An electric utility that consistently ranks the lowest in reliability and satisfaction in the country cannot be trusted to support or uphold the means to these necessities. Establishing a consumer-owned utility cannot worsen the reliability, service, or affordability of electricity as these values are clearly not being held by the current investor-owned utilities.

As the future generations of Mainers, we urge you to consider independence and justice for the people of Maine as well as protecting the ideal of a sustainable future and to therefore pass 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. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.