

Tessa Rosenberry  
Rockland

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the EUT, thank you for hosting this public hearing. My name is Tessa Rosenberry, and I'm calling in from Rockland to express my 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 believe that establishing a consumer-owned utility would facilitate a bright future for Mainers and the beautiful state we call home.

My partner and I moved home to Maine after college for a number of reasons: to be closer to family, to connect with the extraordinary land and landscape here, and to start a small composting business. We hoped that this community would share our values and our goals of reducing waste, building up our local soils and food systems, and mitigating the impacts of climate change as best we could – and we were not disappointed. We've discovered again and again that Mainers embody a deep connection to this place, and are deeply passionate about building a future where a good life here in Maine can be sustained for generations to come.

And yet, most Mainers have little to no say in the way that their energy systems are helping to shape that future. Not only have Maine's existing, investor-owned utilities not facilitated a transition to renewable energy, there is evidence to suggest they have been actively investing in its obstruction. When such crucial public utilities are owned and operated by private interests, the public suffers.

But as a starry-eyed young optimist, I can still envision a future where Mainers are instrumental in turning the tide of this climate crisis. Where the disastrous effects of sea level rise, ocean acidification and warming, drought, loss of biodiversity, extreme weather events - where these threats are met head-on by good, thoughtful systems. By resilient local communities, and by state-wide efforts dedicated to putting the people and their futures first. I can see a future where Maine's climate goals aren't only met, but exceeded. Where the previously underrepresented and underserved are not only benefactors, but leaders in building this better future. And this future isn't so out of reach, really. But we won't reach it when far-off private interests are the ones at the wheel.

A consumer-owned utility is a vital and meaningful step in the right direction. Placing control of our utilities in our own hands will allow us to align its operations with our values, to reinvest revenues in necessary infrastructure and labor, and to ensure that it serves us today and continues to serve us into the future.

Thank you so much for your time and thoughtful consideration of this issue.