

Terri Stevens  
Kennebunk

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak in support of LD #1708, An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company. My name is Terri Stevens and I live in Kennebunk, Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to discuss what a Consumer-Owned Utility can do for Maine.

I feel well positioned to talk about the need for a consumer owned utility for Maine. As a resident of Kennebunk, I have lived through two different utility regimes: one, CMP, for-profit; and one, Kennebunk Power and Light, not-for-profit and consumer owned. Under CMP, loss of power was more frequent and power outages lasted for extended periods of time. In the winter, these outages can be devastating and for a single mom of three, providing for my children on an extremely tight budget, extended outages meant spoiled refrigerated and frozen food—spoilage that our budget simply couldn't sustain.

Since switching to Kennebunk Light and Power, however, my power has only gone out twice in 15 years, and, on those rare occasions, only for a short period of time. It's truly a testament to the power of public ownership. Because Kennebunk Light & Power is wholly owned by its consumers, our utility is no longer beholden to out-of-state investors whose only interest—maximum profit—is necessarily opposed to the interests of the consumers. Instead, our consumer owned utility is able to focus on the only thing a utility should focus on: providing reliable service to its consumers.

I support LD #1708 because it would replace CMP and Versant, which are foreign owned, unreliable, and expensive, with a Consumer-Owned Utility that is local, reliable, low cost, capable of addressing the climate crisis, and, most of all, responsive to the needs of the people instead of the demands of profit. Thank you for listening to my testimony today. I am ready to answer any questions you may have.