

Testimony by Faith Woodman on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) before the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology on LD 1708: An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company.

Senator Lawrence and Representative Berry and other members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Faith Woodman. I live in Bath. I enthusiastically support An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company.

I am here on behalf the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN), representing Unitarian Universalists in 25 congregations across the state. As a person of faith, I am guided by two specific Unitarian Universalist Principles: the interdependent web of all existence and justice, equity and compassion.

I speak for many Mainers when I say I am fed up with high electricity costs, power outages, internet loss, incompetence and lack of accountability. But most of all, I fear that Maine will not convert to an all-electric economy and reach our critical climate goals because we rely on two costly, inept foreign-owned companies to provide electricity to the majority of Mainers. CMP and Versant's loyalties and profits are designed by law to benefit their investors and not the welfare of Maine people or our need to reach carbon neutrality.

Now is the time to replace CMP and Versant with a consumer-owned utility, locally controlled by Mainers, saving billions of dollars. We can't risk a failed climate policy or the economic and social well being of our state and its people by continuing this outdated, costly monopoly relationship.

This is also an economic justice issue. Many Mainers can't afford their electricity bills now and certainly won't in the future if CMP and Versant provide their electricity. Last winter 150,000 CMP customers were threatened with shutoff notices. Low income Mainers are hit the hardest by rising electricity prices. With increased electricity costs from massive grid and infrastructure expansions, they and many others will be crushed by the utilities' guaranteed price increases.

If I were lucky enough to be a customer of Kennebunk Light and Power, I would have saved approximately \$322 or 35 percent on my January, February and March CMP bills (based on kWh prices of 15.8c/kWh vs.10.2c/kWh). Versant would have charged even more (16.8c/kWh vs.10.2c/kWh) and has asked for a 25 percent price increase over three years. I am angry about it, not just for me, but all Mainers who are being gouged on their electricity bills. CMP and Versant's charges will only escalate in the future with increased energy needs.

We don't get our money's worth from CMP and Versant. We can and we must do better. I ask you to support LD 1708. Be bold. Our future depends on it. Thank you.