

Scott Vlaun  
Center for an Ecology-Based Economy  
LD 1959

Scott Vlaun, Testimony, LD1959

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and esteemed members of The Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

2022 finds Maine, and indeed the entire planet, in an ever deepening climate emergency. To mitigate the most severe impacts of this emergency will require a swift de-carbonization of our economy, including the beneficial electrification of the transportation, housing and manufacturing sectors as well as a rapid transition to clean renewable sources of energy. Thanks in large part to the Governor's Office, Maine's forward thinking Climate Action Plan and subsequent Community Resilience Partnership program will move us in the right direction. Unfortunately LD 1959, "An act to ensure Transmission and Distribution Utility Accountability will not.

My name is Scott Vlaun. I'm the director of the Center for an Ecology-Based Economy in Norway where we have been working towards a just transition to a post-carbon economy for the last 9 years. And whether we are working for favorable community solar policy, trying to get two acres of solar panels on a local sealed municipal landfill integrated into the grid, or simply hooking up public solar-powered EV charging, CMP has either outright fought us, dragged their feet, or simply proved inept. Too many lawyers and lobbyists. Not enough engineers.

We need better. Maine needs an electric utility partner that is less interested in avoiding fines by barely meeting minimum standards, than they are about leading Maine to meet its ambitious, but essential renewable energy and beneficial electrification goals.

Whether it is public housing or community solar, CEBE is deeply committed to a democratic, cooperative model where profits are recirculated in local economies, where essential enterprises like our utilities and food system are rooted in community, where accountability is built into the DNA of an enterprise rather than forced upon it by punitive regulations. Rather than fostering cooperation, LD 1959 seems like a hastily constructed outline for an increasingly adversarial relationship, rather than one of cooperation with shared vision and goals.

Maine needs visionary leadership guiding our public utility through this crucial transition and there is little time to waste. This bill takes us in the wrong direction, essentially rewarding the mediocre and miring us in the status quo of failure. I urge the committee to vote "ought not to pass" on LD1959 and work instead towards a meaningful transition to a public utility that serves the needs of Maine while working to insure a liveable climate future for its people and planet.

Thank you, and I welcome any questions.

Scott Vlaun,  
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