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**Testimony Neither for Nor Against
LD 697, “An Act To Enhance the Energy Security of Maine Residents”
March 8, 2022**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is William Harwood and I am the Public Advocate, here today to testify neither for nor against LD 697, “An Act To Enhance the Energy Security of Maine Residents.”

While the OPA appreciates Representative Berry’s reasoning behind bringing forward this amendment to the proposed legislation, we believe that LD 697 is not necessary. The current statutory standard for PUC approval of proposed reorganizations requires that the reorganization produces “net benefits” to ratepayers. This standard is broad enough to allow parties to raise the types of concerns referenced in LD 697. Specifically, if a party establishes that foreign ownership of a Maine utility is likely to harm ratepayers, the Commission must consider that finding when weighing all the possible harms and benefits of the proposed reorganization in reaching its decision whether to approve the reorganization.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 697 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Harwood".

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate