



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Senator Mark Lawrence
Representative Seth Berry
Committee on Energy, Utilities & Technology

From: Robert S. Howe, Sierra Club Maine

Date: March 16, 2022

Re: Testimony in support of proposed amendment to LD 318, Resolve, To Direct the Office of Public Advocate To Study Reforming Maine's System of Retail Electricity Supply to Provide More Options to Maine Customers and Support Maine's Climate Goals

I am writing on behalf of Sierra Club Maine's nearly 22,000 members and supporters. Our chapter is one of 64 chapters of Sierra Club nationally. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide and protect everyone's right to a healthy world.

Sierra Club Maine supports Representative Grohoski's proposed committee amendment to L.D. 318. The amendment offers a comprehensive, balanced and thoughtful approach to examining our current system of supplying electricity. This examination is appropriate for the Office of the Public Advocate as the representative of Maine's electric ratepayers.

Sec. 3 of the bill gets at many of the problems previously identified by the Office of the Public Advocate in its review of retail, residential competition of a few years ago. As examples:

Paragraph 2 would help in the following ways:

- It would place more information into the hands of ratepayers that would make the competitive marketplace more meaningful, as without informed consumers the market cannot work properly.
- It would encourage competitive electric providers to offer value-added services that could provide ratepayers with devices and information on how to reduce their electric costs.

- It would provide more assistance to low-income ratepayers through payment plans, discounts and ways of accessing renewable energy.

Paragraph 3 would put into the hands of ratepayers critical information regarding the impact on the climate of their electric supply choices, information that more and more ratepayers are no doubt seeking. This information will prompt other ratepayers to begin thinking of climate impact even if they had not done so before.

Paragraph 4 is very timely, given the recent price volatility in electricity markets.

Paragraph 5 would examine alternatives to Standard Offer Service. Although the Standard Offer has turned out to be in some ways the most effective piece of the competitive electricity market envisioned by the restructuring that took place in 2000, a re-examination of it makes sense.

Paragraph 6 seems aimed at some of the previously identified problems with residential retail competition and could help make the market more effective and trusted by ratepayers.

Sierra Club Maine believes the amendment outlines a worthy endeavor for the Office of the Public Advocate and stakeholders to engage in. We urge your support.