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Judicial Branch testimony neither for nor against LD 2132, An Act to Clarify the Right to Appeal Certain Public Utilities Commission Decisions:

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Julie Finn and I represent the Judicial Branch. I would like to provide testimony regarding this bill.

While the Judicial Branch does not take a position on the bill, we would like to point out that the amendment to current law proposed in LD 2132 amends 35-A MRS § 1303 titled “Investigations,” rather than 35-A MRS § 1320 titled “Review of Commission Action.” Because current appeals to the Law Court from the PUC are brought pursuant to section 1320, it would be helpful if the proposed change clarified whether the provisions of section 1320 would apply to the new appeals as well.

We do not anticipate asking for additional positions to handle the increased number of appeals that would result from the passage of this bill at this time because we are not able to accurately estimate the number of additional filings. However, we may, in the future, need to adjust our staffing and add a position if the appeals so warrant.

Thank you for your consideration.