



MUUSAN

Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Jill Linzee, I live in New Harbor, and I serve as Co-Chair of the Climate Change Group for the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network.

I am here today on behalf of our statewide organization, (known as MUUSAN) to express our very clear opposition to LD 1959 - An Act To Ensure Transmission and Distribution Utility Accountability.

We've had the opportunity to read Gordon Weil's very thorough analysis of the bill in his article in the Maine Monitor, as well as hear his presentation on the bill. We take Dr. Weil's analysis very seriously.

Why do we need to create a report card, now, for CMP and Versant when they have so consistently – over the course of a number of years – failed, time and again, by their own industry standard? What new revelations are going to come from the very byzantine and drawn out process that this bill outlines that we don't already know? A process that offers no deadlines.

There is a much larger and growing number of Maine voters who are paying very close attention to how state government is handling our utilities than many may realize.

The referendum vote last November to stop the CMP Corridor project should be a wake up call to everyone in state government. The public no longer wants to do business with CMP. We're tired of their high paid lobbyists and lawyers, their deceptive ad campaigns, their lousy service and exorbitant bills. We want and need a change. We don't want a bill that pretends on the surface to hold CMP accountable, but, on closer examination, really doesn't. We don't want a bill that hands all of the power over this process to the governor – through appointments to the PUC and Public Advocate – and removes legislative oversight and a mechanism for public input.

Some of us opposed to this bill are motivated by our very serious concerns about what's happening with climate change. Our window of opportunity to act, to stop it from getting much worse than it could be, is rapidly closing. And climate change is all about our energy use. Addressing this critical issue should be central to this bill, and it's not.

But there are other issues that unite ALL Mainers. Everyone is concerned about local control of our energy and the rising costs of our utilities. It doesn't matter if you're a Democrat or Republican or an Independent – we are all concerned about rates and how expensive our energy costs are now and are going to be in the future.

If we are looking for a “win” for the people of Maine, how about a bill that directly addresses those concerns?

Thank you. Jill Linzee