



MUUSAN

## Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, I appreciate your commitment to this lengthy hearing, and to patiently listening to the voices of Mainers from across the state. My name is Jill Linzee, I live in New Harbor, and I serve as Co-Chair of the Climate Change Issue Group for the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network.

I am here today on behalf of our statewide organization, (known as MUUSAN) to express the wholehearted and enthusiastic support of our membership for **LD 1708, An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company**. MUUSAN represents a statewide network of 25 different churches and congregations that extend from Sanford in the south, all the way north to Houlton and Caribou. We have congregations in all major cities and towns in Maine – Portland, Bangor, Augusta, Lewiston/Auburn, Biddeford/Saco, Brunswick – and in so many other towns throughout the state, including Norway, Pittsfield, Kennebunk, Dexter, Ellsworth, Waterville, Castine, Sangerville, Eastport and others. AND we have a long history in Maine, dating back to 1674 (a hundred years before the Revolution).

We have strongly endorsed this legislation for more than 2 years now, closely tracking its evolution and the various reports and research that have led to the current bill, LD 1708. We support the passage of this bill for the following reasons:

- 1) **We believe that this is one of the most important bills before the Maine legislature in 2021 to address the critical issue of climate change.** The six communities in the U.S. that are currently operating with 100% renewable energy – a goal of Maine’s Climate Council - are all powered by consumer-owned utilities. The truth is that CMP actively opposed important renewable energy legislation in Maine. Why would we trust them with providing us with renewable energy for our future?
- 2) **CMP has been rated THE worst utility in the nation by its customers - among all 142 large and mid-size utilities - for three years in a row. Versant is third worst.** Many homeowners and business owners in my local community have horror stories about inaccurate and exorbitant bills from CMP that they’ve been battling with them over for years – YEARS. A woman I met in a neighboring town told me that her husband had worked for CMP and that CMP had cut costs by reducing the number of workers and work vehicles, which had the result of placing an unreasonable amount of expectations and work overload on the remaining workers. They hate CMP. We need a better option for our future and a more responsible business plan for our state’s utility, and LD 1708 provides that option.
- 3) **As we become more dependent on electricity to power our future, we need a utility that we have more local control over.** Leaving something as critical as our expanding energy needs to the whims of a foreign-owned, multi-national monopoly is NOT in the best interest of the citizens of Maine.
- 4) **We want ALL the citizens of Maine to be able to afford the energy needed to maintain their households and transportation.** It’s been proven that consumer-owned utilities will lead to both REDUCED costs, as well as more reliable service. The economics of converting to the Pine Tree Power Company represent a vast improvement over our current investor-owned utilities.
- 5) **There is broad bipartisan support for LD 1708.** I have spoken with Republicans, Democrats and Independents who all believe this is the right direction for Maine’s future.

I hope that our Maine state legislators will embrace this important opportunity for our state and vote to support LD 1708. Thank you.

Jill Linzee