



Contact: Stephanie Clifford, campaign manager, (207) 415-8319,
sclifford421@gmail.com

For Immediate Release - Monday, April 19, 2021

Bi-partisan legislation announced to create [Pine Tree Power Company](#) - a nonprofit, consumer-owned utility which will replace CMP and Versant

Consumer-owned utilities in Maine charge customers 58% less than investor-owned utilities

AUGUSTA, Maine -- Today, at the state house, Democratic and Republican legislators joined with conservation, consumer, and citizen representatives to support new legislation that would establish a nonprofit, consumer-owned utility: [the Pine Tree Power Company](#).

They described the urgent need to rebuild Maine's failing utility infrastructure and create a utility that is dedicated to working on behalf of Maine people, to replace the utilities we have that serve foreign boardrooms and focus on sending profits to distant shareholders.

"I support Pine Tree Power because Maine people want and deserve more affordable, reliable and cleaner electricity," says **Rep. Nicole Grohoski**, (D-Ellsworth), a member of the legislature's utilities committee. "Maine's for-profit, investor-owned utilities -- CMP and Versant -- are charging Maine households 58% more than our consumer-owned utilities. That's right, 58% more. In fact, if CMP and Versant charged the same average rate as our consumer-owned utilities, Mainers would save \$155 million/year. Pine Tree Power will help us capture these funds for the benefit of Maine people, instead of hemorrhaging profits to governments and shareholders in other parts of the world."

"Electricity is the lifeblood of Maine homes and businesses, and it is becoming more important every day," says **Senator Rick Bennett** (R, Oxford), who formerly served as Senate President. "Right now, foreign governments and foreign corporations own Maine's major utility monopolies. This ownership model has been a disaster, leaving Maine with the most outages, the longest outages, the worst customer service, and

among the highest rates in the country. Working together, we can do better and establish Pine Tree Power, a consumer-owned non-profit, managed on behalf of Mainers and accountable only to us."

"Electricity is central to the quality of life and future of Maine people and businesses," says **Rep. Nathan Carlow** (R-Buxton), who serves on the legislature's utilities and is the youngest member of the Maine legislature. "Young Mainers, my contemporaries, will live with the decisions we make today. The facts are clear: investor-owned utilities are not meeting the needs of the Maine people, and the legislation we're proposing will not only strengthen our grid, but it will also lower rates, advance Maine's carbon emission goals, and make Maine people the primary decision makers in our electric future. These are the reasons why I am working collaboratively with other legislators to create Pine Tree Power, a Maine consumer-owned utility working only for Maine, not Spain, not Calgary, and not profit-seeking investors in other parts of the world."

"Consumer-owned utilities like the proposed Pine Tree Power Company are a tried-and-true way to deliver locally-controlled, reliable power at a lower cost to utility customers" says **Sharon A Staz**, who served as General Manager of Kennebunk Light and Power District from 1998-2015. "Consumer-owned utilities already serve 97 Maine towns, from Calais to Kennebunk and they've proven themselves nation-wide, bringing benefits to 1 in 3 Americans -- from downeast Maine to Nebraska, Florida, and California. Their customers spend fewer than half as many minutes each year in the dark, pay lower rates, and are far more likely to approve of their utility. And when it comes to customer satisfaction, CMP is the worst and Versant is the third worst utility in the nation. And guess what? The same surveys show that 11 of the 12 top-rated utilities are consumer-owned."

"Maine's current utility structure is the largest obstacle we face in achieving the state's climate goals," says **Vaughan Woodruff**, Pittsfield, founder and former CEO of Insource Renewables and past chair of Maine's solar industry trade group. "While CMP claims to be partners in our clean energy transition, they have consistently fought efforts to expand the development of solar and have failed to provide us with the grid we deserve. The Pine Tree Power Company will restore democracy to our energy sector and provide Mainers with the only utility structure in the U.S. that has demonstrated the ability to deliver 100% clean energy to its customers -- consumer ownership."

"Twelve score and six years ago today, the people of Lexington and Concord rose up against abuse by a foreign power whose only purpose was to extract wealth from its distant colonies," says **Rep. Seth Berry**, (D-Bowdoinham), House Chair of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, past House Majority Leader, and Founder of the Legislative Broadband Caucus. "Today, the people of Maine rise to assert our power, and our independence. Our new bill, "An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company," will allow us to control our own money and our own energy destiny -- to advance fast and fairly toward our own clean energy and connectivity future."

Our Power is a coalition of Maine ratepayers, business leaders, energy experts, conservationists, and others committed to putting the Pine Tree State's energy future in the hands of Mainers.

##