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For Immediate Release

## **Energy, Utilities & Technology Committee takes historic vote in support of Pine Tree Power, to create a Consumer-Owned Utility**

***Vote is 9-2 with bi-partisan support***

AUGUSTA, Maine -- Today, the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee voted 9-2 in support of L.D. 1708, ["An Act To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit Utility, To Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence"](#). This historic and bi-partisan vote, is the first time in history that a Maine legislative committee has voted in support of putting the power of our electrical grid directly into the hands of Maine people.

Committee Chair and lead sponsor, Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham) led the vote in support with all Democratic members joining him, plus Rep. Nathan Carlow (R-Buxton).

Co-sponsor, Rep. Nicole Grohoski (D-Ellsworth), said in support of the bill: "Today, this committee voted to put Maine people first. We voted to make clear that profit-driven, foreign ownership of our power grid is too costly and problematic. CMP and Versant are charging Maine households 58% more than Maine's consumer-owned utilities and we can no longer afford their exploitative business model."

Republican Rep. Carlow added, "I have always believed that our power grid should be working only for Maine, not Spain, not Calgary, and not profit-seeking investors in other parts of the world. That is why I supported this bill and why I believe that Maine people will resoundingly vote for it when it goes to the polls."

A recent poll by Survey USA showed [75% of Maine people support buying out CMP/Versant and creating a consumer-owned utility](#).

Senator Rick Bennett (R-Oxford County), the lead Senate Sponsor of the bill, said, "I look forward to leading efforts to pass this bill on the Senate floor. For too long our utilities have been governed by foreign governments and foreign boards that do not understand or care about the

needs of Maine people. This ownership model has been a disaster, leaving Maine with the [10th highest utility rates in the nation](#) and [dead last when it comes to reliability](#) with the most and longest outages in the country.”

Rep. Berry said, “I have confidence that once my colleagues in the House learn the details of this bill and how it will lower costs, improve reliability, and allow Maine to be the first state in the nation to reach 100% clean energy, both equitably and affordably, they will pass the legislation and send it out to Maine voters for ratification.”

LD 1708 passed with minor revisions suggested by the PUC and committee members and should go to the House for initial floor votes in the next week.

*LD 1708 will create the Pine Tree Power Company, a privately operated, nonprofit, consumer-owned utility controlled by an elected board. The company is dedicated to providing its customer-owners in Maine with reliable, affordable electric transmission and distribution services and to help the State meet its climate, energy and connectivity goals in the most rapid and affordable manner possible. The bill requires that, for the Act to take effect it must be submitted to Maine voters at a statewide election held in the month of November following passage of this Act.*

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*[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.*

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