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## **Breaking News: Pine Tree Power Bill - L.D. 1708 - passes House and Senate, On to the Governor's Desk**

Today, after a brief recess, the Legislature has voted in favor of [L.D. 1708 "An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company."](#) casting a bipartisan 77-68 vote in the House to attach an amendment to the bill that they supported two weeks ago. And the Senate voted 18-15 to support the new package. The bill now heads to Governor Janet Mills' desk.

If Governor Mills signs the bill or allows 10 days to pass without either her signature or a veto, the bill will become law. This would put the question of consumer ownership of Maine's grid on the ballot in November 2021.

Stephanie Clifford, campaign manager for [Our Power](#), a coalition of Maine ratepayers, businesses, energy experts, conservationists, and dozens of grassroots organizations said, "Thank you legislators for voting in favor of L.D. 1708. We hope Governor Mills will do the right thing and send the bill to Maine voters so that this November we all have the opportunity to choose to put our energy future into Maine's hands."

"Pine Tree Power Company will be a consumer-owned electric utility that will lower costs, increase reliability and provide local control for Maine's electric grid."

Clifford continued saying, "L.D. 1708 passed despite intense lobbying by Maine's investor-owned utilities, CMP and Versant. But a strong grassroots coalition of Maine people prevailed. This is a clear signal: Mainers are sick of dealing with the failures of investor-owned CMP and Versant, and we want to control our electricity future."

An amendment introduced today revised the bill to require the Pine Tree Power Company to pay property taxes directly to Maine municipalities, while maintaining its nonprofit status. This replaced previous bill language requiring payments in lieu of taxes.

Representative Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham), sponsor of L.D. 1708, said "This amendment spoke directly to Governor Mills' top two concerns, and concerns voiced by some municipal leaders. We are pleased that the revised language won back the support needed to send this to Governor Mills, and hope to win her support for our effort as well."

Clifford said, “If Governor Mills chooses to veto the bill against the will of Maine voters and legislators, we will continue our campaign through a citizens’ initiative. The Governor’s choice is not whether or not Maine voters will have a say on this, it is when we will all have a say.”

Petition gathering on such a citizen-initiated referendum would begin this summer and would likely put the question on the ballot in November 2022, the same day that Mills and all legislators are up for re-election.

*Our Power is a group 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*

**[OurPowerMaine.org](https://OurPowerMaine.org)**

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