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Rep. Seth Berry (207) 522-1609, [seth.berry@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:seth.berry@legislature.maine.gov)  
**(Rep. Berry is in the State House, but was denied entrance to today's press conference, FYI)**

## **L.D. 1708 Vetoed by Governor Mills; Our Power Will Take Proposal Directly To Voters**

Today, Governor Janet Mills vetoed "[L.D. 1708 "An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company."](#) a bill to create a consumer-owned utility company, which passed with bipartisan majorities in both the Maine House and Senate on June 30.

Mills vetoed the bill less than 24 hours after the [PUC released a report demonstrating that CMP's management is in shambles](#), as the company is being run top-down by a corporate office in Spain that dictates the profit-at-any-cost philosophy we see in Maine. The report says the company's management has focused so much on "*meeting the earnings expectations of the equity investment community*," that it *'has sacrificed effectiveness in providing service.'*

The report also mentioned that CMP is just 2% of the business of the huge, multinational investor-owned conglomerate, Iberdrola and CMP is now operated for the benefit of a holding company within this holding company.

"Maine regulators cannot fix this problem any more than a mouse can tame a cat. Maine is the mouse in this game. We're in a critical situation as our electricity delivery system is at stake - the lifeblood of our homes and businesses," said energy expert and Our Power coalition member, William Dunn.

CMP and Versant have failed Maine miserably, fighting clean power at every turn and leaving Maine with the least reliable grid in the nation, and the worst customer service for three years running, and high prices too.

Now, unless the Legislature is able to override the Governor's veto by two-thirds supermajorities in both the House and the Senate, the question of consumer ownership of Maine's two investor-owned utilities, CMP and Versant, will not be on the November 2021 ballot. The Legislature will reconvene on July 19 to vote on the veto, and on all other vetoes Governor Mills has issued since July 1.

Representative Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham) said, "I'm deeply disappointed in the veto. After winning bipartisan majority support in the committee, House, and Senate, we had hoped the Governor too would trust Maine voters to weigh in this fall. Over three years of diligent work, a diverse group of legislators, utility experts, economists, conservationists, among many others, crafted this policy to meet the complex and urgent needs of our energy future. I want to thank all of the legislators in both chambers who understood and supported L.D. 1708.

Rep. Berry continued, "Today the Governor vetoed our best shot at a rapid and just transition to clean energy. The leading large US utility in the race to 100% renewables is consumer-owned SMUD, with 1.5 million customers — they are 20 years ahead of Maine's goal of 2050. The first six US communities to reach 100% renewables, all before 2016, are all powered by consumer owned utilities too. The case is closed: COUs are by far the best business model to get to clean energy affordably, and to depend on for all our future energy needs."

Senator Rick Bennett (R-Oxford), lead Senate co-sponsor of the bill, said, "Would we trust a foreign, for-profit monopoly to own and run our public schools, our hospitals, our fire departments? Of course not. So why should we trust them with the grid that will power our entire future?"

"Rep. Berry and many others have worked hard to solicit constructive input from the Governor since 2019, have offered multiple options for compromise, and for two years have been relegated to staff unable to answer simple questions, Sen. Bennett continued. "The bill addresses every one of the questions and concerns the Governor raises in her letter. Letting Maine voters have a say at this pivotal moment was the only right thing to do."

Stephanie Clifford, campaign manager for [Our Power](#), a coalition of Maine ratepayers, businesses, energy experts, conservationists, and dozens of grassroots organizations said, "We are disappointed, but more energized than ever. With three-quarters of Mainers supporting our proposal and volunteers contacting us daily, we are confident we can collect signatures and succeed at the ballot box."

She went on to say, "We have already established a diverse grassroots statewide coalition of Maine people and organizations and we look forward to having the opportunity to talk to Maine voters from Kittery to Fort Kent about the importance of

creating a consumer-owned utility. Now is the time for Maine people to take control of our energy future.”

*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](http://OurPowerMaine.org)**

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