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Our Power Begins Citizen Initiative Process to Put Consumer-Owned Utility Before Voters

The nonprofit group Our Power formally began the Citizen Initiative process in order to ask Maine voters whether to replace Maine's two investor-owned utilities, Central Maine Power and Versant, with a nonprofit consumer-owned utility. The move toward a referendum follows the historic passage in June of the [popular bipartisan bill LD 1708](#), "An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company," scuttled by Governor Mills' veto.

"Today, we started the process to let Mainers vote to replace CMP and Versant with a proven alternative: a consumer-owned electric utility that serves Maine customers instead of distant investors," said Wayne Jortner, one of the petitioners, who represented consumers for decades as senior counsel at the Public Advocate's office.

"Maine's investor-owned electric utilities have the worst outages and [customer satisfaction](#) and the [10th highest rates in the nation](#)," Jortner added. "While the Legislature passed a viable bipartisan solution with broad public support, the Governor blocked it. The Citizen Initiative will give Maine people the opportunity to fix, modernize, and control the electric utilities we depend on every day."

CMP and Versant charge their customers 58% more on average than Maine's current consumer-owned utilities charge while providing some of the most unreliable service in the nation.

Stephanie Clifford, campaign manager for Our Power, a coalition of Maine ratepayers, businesses, energy experts, conservationists, and dozens of grassroots organizations emphasized that public support for the Pine Tree Power proposal is high: "Our Power is excited to launch a statewide citizen initiative campaign. [75% of registered Maine voters support replacing CMP and Versant](#) with a local non-profit consumer-owned utility company, so we know the people are with us."

Our Power is seeking volunteers to help collect the 60,067 required petition signatures on November 2, Election Day, and on other days this fall. Mainers wanting to help should visit ourpowermaine.org to sign up.

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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

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