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**For Immediate Release**

## **CMP to Reimburse Nonprofit as New Law Broadens Participation in Utility Regulation**

HALLOWELL, MAINE--Under a new Maine law intended to remove expense as an obstacle to participate in key Public Utility Commission (PUC) proceedings, yesterday for the first time the PUC [announced](#) a local nonprofit organization will be reimbursed for costs incurred in preparing for a case involving Central Maine Power and Maine Natural Gas.

Advocates of the new law say many PUC proceedings are complex and can involve significant expense. As a result, only utility corporations and other deep-pocketed organizations typically participate. LD 2018, passed by the legislature in 2022, requires the PUC or a utility to reimburse a participant (or “intervenor” in formal cases) if the participant has an unrepresented perspective to offer, is likely to provide helpful information to the PUC to help guide their decisions, and if intervening would pose a hardship for the organization.

“It’s really just about making sure everyone has a seat at the table, not just the big players with deep pockets,” said Seth Berry, a former state legislator who was involved in crafting LD 2018 and currently serves as the executive director of Our Power, a Maine nonprofit focused on improving Maine’s electrical grid and service. “This is an important step toward having a true energy democracy.”

The PUC case involved CMP’s corporate parent Avangrid, poised to be [taken private by its predominant shareholder Iberdrola](#), the Spanish multinational energy behemoth. Avangrid [asked the Maine Public Utility Commission to waive the usual procedure](#) in which the utility must show that the planned change of ownership won’t negatively affect customers. Several stakeholders asked to “intervene” (to participate formally as interested parties) in the proceeding, including Our Power.

In this instance, Avangrid will pay the full cost of Our Power’s participation, up to a limit of \$80,000.

Although the PUC ended up [granting Avangrid’s request](#) to skip the review, the intervenors had already spent considerable time preparing and Our Power had incurred significant expenses.

“Now that we’ve blazed a trail for others to follow,” noted Berry, “money should no longer be a deciding factor in whether you can participate fully in these crucial decisions about our public utilities.”

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