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Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

The Office of the Public Advocate (“OPA”) testifies in support of LD 658 “Resolve, To Direct a Plan for Energy Independence for Maine” which resolve directs the Governor's Energy Office (“GEO”) to adopt a 10-year energy independence plan, including conservation and renewable energy strategies, for the State to become a net exporter of energy by 2030 and requires the office to develop the plan through a collaborative stakeholder process. The plan must be submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (“EUT”) by December 31, 2019 and authorizes the EUT to report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature related to the plan.

The goal appears to be for Maine to become a new exporter of energy by 2030. The Plan as set forth in LD 658 must include a comprehensive set of actionable policies to achieve energy independence and the plan must have “actionable policies” to achieve these goals.

The GEO would convene a collaborative group of agencies and stakeholders which would collaboratively and with a strategic planning process develop this plan. The OPA is a member of this stakeholder group.

In fact, the first meeting was just held yesterday afternoon and was well attended by the designated steering committee and project team. The GEO and the stakeholders recognize that a number of challenges exist regarding Maine’s energy economy. This

will continue to be an ongoing process in order to address these challenges to increase energy efficiency, seek ways to improve energy security and reliability, formalize processes to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration on energy related issues and protect the access and affordability of energy to moderate and low-income Mainers as well as many of Maine's rural citizens.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 658, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate