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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 834 “An Act To Establish Minimum Service Standards for Electric Utilities” which proposes to establish service interruption standards and require transmission and distribution utilities that do not meet these standards to take corrective action. LD 834 directs the Maine Public Utilities Commission (“MPUC”) to require, by rule, transmission and distribution (“T&D”) utilities to keep records and report service interruptions to the commission. It also requires a utility that experiences service interruptions at a rate that exceeds the statewide average service interruption rate by 50% or more to submit a plan for, implement and track corrective actions to address the service interruptions.

In essence, this bill would direct the MPUC to adopt rules that would require all T&D utilities to keep track of and report outages, and set standards for how that information is calculated, and set standards for corrective action if a utility exceeds a statewide average for outage rates.

Some of this data is routinely reported to the MPUC by Central Maine Power (“CMP”) and Emera Maine (“Emera”) in the context of rate case and annual update proceedings. The OPA supports the proposed rulemaking where it would standardize the collection and reporting of outage information.

The OPA also supports the concept of setting prescriptive requirements for corrective action. The proposal of corrective action plans and annual reporting makes sense. However, considering the massive outages following the late October 2017 storm, it is possible that there may be other bills that address this issue in different

ways. Since there would be potentially high costs to corrective action plans, a discussion of such standards would best occur in the context of the proposals in other LDs. A wider discussion of how to spend limited dollars on reliability could be in the interests of all Maine ratepayers.

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 834, 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