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May 20, 2021

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

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate and I am here today to testify in support of LD 1707 “An Act To Increase Transparency on Cable and Internet and Other Communications Services Price Increases.”

The OPA would like to thank President Jackson for submitting LD 1707. The Office of the Public Advocate has always been a proponent of rate transparency when Maine consumers are billed for services. Too often, customers are presented with a higher bill with no explanation for the increase from their cable and/or internet providers.

The bill “... requires providers of communications services, including any wireline voice, satellite, data, fixed wireless data or video retail service, to notify affected customers of a rate increase and the reason for the rate increase, within a reasonable time prior to the rate increase.” LD 1707 also directs the PUC adopt routine technical rules, as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. If the PUC needs to allocate more resources to regulate this proposed legislation, the OPA asks that the committee take that into consideration.

The OPA acknowledges that often a company will include a line item on a bill statement indicating an upcoming rate change. These notices are often in small print and easily missed by consumers, especially with many customers opting for electronic

bill statements. If LD 1707 moves forward, the OPA asks that companies send separate notices of impending bill increases and that any additional costs resulting from administration of the proposed notification requirement not be assessed to the customers by the cable and internet providers.

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 1707, 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