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**Testimony Neither For Nor Against
LD 2113 “An Act to Establish a Long Range Electricity Grid Planning Group”
January 22, 2026**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

My name is Heather Sanborn, here today as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 2113, “An Act to Establish a Long Range Electricity Grid Planning Group”

We appreciate the importance of a robust grid planning process to prepare our electric grid for affordably meeting Maine’s energy policy goals. CMP and Versant recently submitted their first Integrated Grid Plans (IGPs) to the Public Utilities Commission. Indeed, Versant filed their plan just last week. The OPA is currently reviewing these plans and will participate in the PUC docket to analyze the fitness of these plans to meet current challenges.

We expect to collectively learn many lessons from this first iteration of the integrated grid planning process. For example, the process has highlighted for us how quickly load growth forecasts can become stale and render the long-term plan stale. Consider just two key federal policy moments that bracketed the creation of our first IGPs:

1. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed in August 2022, with huge tax credits and incentives for electrification of transportation and distributed energy resources;
2. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act passed in July 2025, largely repealing the tax credit and incentives put in place in the IRA.

The IGPs were mandated to take into account the imagined future world where the IRA would remain in force, but by the time the IGPs were being finalized, those incentives were already gone.

Long-range planning is important, but such planning cannot be static or episodic. Instead, it needs to be iterative and continuous. Long-range planning also should not be built around a particular static load forecast, but rather should be designed to shape the load forecast itself so that the grid we need can be built for the lowest possible cost.

Ultimately, each investment in the grid that a utility decides to make should be based on the very best information available at the time the investment decision is made. Investment decisions should not be artificially limited or directed by an “approved” plan that may be several years old by the time of the actual decision to commit ratepayer funds to a particular project.

Before we pass additional legislation to require yet another grid plan be created by a different entity, we should carefully reflect on the lessons of the IGPs that have just been

filed. Then we should consider whether to revise the existing IGP statute, augment or replace it with a more independent IGP process like the one presented in this bill, or do something else entirely to ensure that our utilities are continuously planning for an affordable future grid.

I welcome your questions and would be pleased to provide additional information for the work session.

Respectfully submitted,
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Public Advocate