



Testimony in Support
LD 2140, “Resolve, to Pilot a Behavioral Demand Response Program to
Lower Electric Bills and Improve Grid Reliability”
February 19, 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 in support of LD 2140, as amended by the Sponsor’s proposed amendment.

One of the promises of beneficial electrification is that as we move more of our household energy usage to electricity, we will be able to use more of the grid we have already built, more of the time, spreading the costs over more kilowatt hours and reducing rates. However, because the electricity grid must be sized to manage the annual peak level of energy usage on each circuit, the logic of reducing rates really only holds if our overall electricity usage is increasing faster than our peak loads.

Because most residential customers pay a flat per kWh rate for both delivery and supply of electricity, they don’t have any financial incentive to avoid using electricity during the hours of peak stress on the grid. CMP and Versant do offer time-of-use rates for the delivery portion of the residential bill, but virtually no effort has been made to-date on encouraging customers to sign up for these rates or to shift their usage to off-peak hours. Other modern rate design concepts, such as peak-time rebates and critical peak pricing, are also good options for encouraging customers to pay a little more attention to when they are using energy and to shift their usage away from the most critical hours of the year. Collectively, all of these approaches are often referred to as “peak shaving programs.”

The savings from effective peak shaving programs can come from several different areas:

1. By shifting usage to off-peak hours, our utilities won’t need to over-size the grid as much, saving in capital costs;
2. By controlling our peak load growth better than our New England neighbors, we can reduce our share of the costs of the regional transmission system;
3. By shifting more of our electricity usage to off-peak hours, bids for our standard offer supply rates should be lower because electricity supply costs over the course of the year will be lower.

At the OPA, we strongly believe that participation in peak shaving programs should be on an opt-in basis with an effective marketing campaign, encouraging Mainers to make the shift to off-peak usage to save themselves money, while also providing savings to the whole system. We don’t believe such a marketing program has ever been attempted in Maine. We support this pilot project because EMT has a proven track record of effective

outreach to Maine residential utility customers and is well positioned to show that with targeted outreach and a thoughtful marketing campaign, peak shaving can be effectively accomplished.

We are particularly in favor of the “collaboration” section of the Resolve, which would provide Legislative guidance for EMT and the utilities to collaborate on this marketing effort. It is critically important that the utilities become an enthusiastic partner in peak shaving efforts.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sanborn
Public Advocate