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Testimony in Support

LD 2203, “An Act to Limit Rates Charged to Low-income Electricity Consumers”

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 both as Public Advocate, and representing the Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council (ERAC), to testify in strong support of LD 2203, “An Act to Limit Rates Charged to Low-income Electricity Consumers.” We are grateful to the Committee for reporting out this bill after our presentation of ERAC’s most recent report, *Is Maine’s CEP-Served Residential Retail Electric Supply Market Affordable?*

Recent reports about the competitive electricity provider (CEP) market submitted to this Committee have shown that Maine customers of CEPs routinely pay more than the standard offer for electricity. In fact, in the nine-year period between 2016-2024, Mainers paid over \$156 million more than they could have if they were enrolled in standard offer service.

As a result of legislation passed last session, we were able to obtain previously unavailable data supplied by CMP and Versant, enabling us to drill down and study the impact of the CEP market on LIAP recipients. The analysis shows that not only are these customers more likely to purchase electricity from CEPs, but on average, they pay higher rates to CEPs than non-LIAP recipients. It is clear that this market is not working. The policy proposed in LD 2203, ensuring that LIAP recipients are charged no more than the standard offer for supply, takes an important step toward resolving this problem.

This action is particularly urgent because, in October 2026, LIAP’s program design will shift to become a monthly discount off of an eligible customer’s entire bill, rather than a lump sum payment. Because the amount of the LIAP benefit will now be tied directly to the customer’s bill amount, allowing CEPs to charge LIAP customers more than the standard offer rate would waste precious program funds.

Many states, such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York have banned CEPs from selling to recipients of low-income assistance entirely. Others, such as Maryland and Connecticut, place restrictions on the rates that can be charged to low-income assistance recipients. We urge your support of LD 2203, as we feel that the measure strikes an appropriate balance between maintaining consumer choice and protecting public funds.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sanborn
Public Advocate