Office of the Public Advocate
Your Advocate for Affordable Utility Service

Heather Sanborn
Public Advocate

MAINE CONSUMER ADVOCATES CHALLENGE OUTDATED UTILITY INCENTIVE

Complaint to federal regulators could save Maine electric customers more than $2 million a year

September 1, 2026 | HALLOWELL – The Maine Office of the Public Advocate (OPA), Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), joined to file a complaint today asking federal regulators to eliminate an outdated financial perk from the state's two big electric utilities. This action could save Maine ratepayers more than $2 million a year.

OPA, PUC, and DOER brought the complaint to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under Section 206 of the Federal Power Act. They're asking FERC to drop the 0.5 percent "RTO Participation Adder" that's currently built into the return on equity (ROE) for Central Maine Power and Versant Power.

That adder has been around for decades. It gives utilities a small bump in their allowed profit margin as a reward for voluntarily joining a regional transmission organization like ISO New England. But FERC has recently ruled, and the Sixth and Ninth Circuit courts upheld the rulings in 2025, that utilities no longer qualify for the bonus once state law requires them to join.

Maine crossed that line this year. The Legislature passed LD 2038 with bipartisan support, which makes ISO New England participation mandatory for CMP and Versant. Connecticut passed a similar mandatory participation law in 2025.

Now that the requirement is written into both of these states' laws, consumer advocates in each state have filed petitions saying the incentive payment no longer makes sense. If FERC agrees with these petitions, the savings will start next year and add up to more than $2 million annually for Maine ratepayers.

"Maine electricity customers are paying for something they no longer need to pay for. Eliminating this outdated adder would mean real savings on their electric bills," **said Heather Sanborn, Maine's Public Advocate.**

"It is long past time to eliminate this ROE adder, which adds millions of dollars to customer bills. Maine has joined other states in the region in requiring transmission owner participation in ISO-New England, providing a clear pathway to reducing this inflated return on equity," **said Maine PUC Chair Philip L. Bartlett II.**

“This filing demonstrates Maine’s commitment to reducing costs for ratepayers,” **said Celina Cunningham, Acting Commissioner of the Maine Department of Energy Resources.** “The RTO adder raises costs without providing additional benefit to Maine customers. Removing this outdated charge is a commonsense solution with bipartisan legislative support that puts those funds back into the hands of Maine ratepayers.

The savings could continue to grow well beyond Maine's borders. Transmission costs get shared across the whole ISO New England region, so as other states adopt similar mandatory-participation laws and shed their own RTO adders, Maine customers also benefit.

Advocates estimate the total could reach $5 million a year if every New England state follows suit.

The OPA says it's continuing to work with fellow consumer advocates across New England to push similar reforms in other states.

Complaint included as a separate attachment.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:
OPA: Heather Sanborn, 207-624-3687, Heather.Sanborn@maine.gov
PUC: Susan Faloon, 207-287-1394, Susan.Faloon@maine.gov
DOER: Afton Vigue, 207- 458-9290, Afton.Vigue@maine.gov