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**Testimony In Opposition to
LD 1452, “An Act to Require the Commissioners of the Public Utilities Commission
to Be Popularly Elected”**

April 12, 2023

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

My name is William Harwood and I am the Public Advocate, here today to testify in opposition to LD 1452, “An Act to Require the Commissioners of the Public Utilities Commission to Be Popularly Elected.”

This is not the first attempt to allow Maine voters to elect their PUC Commissioners. In January of 1981, the Secretary of State transmitted a citizen petition to the 110th Legislature. LD 522, “An Act To Create the Maine Energy Commission,” proposed reducing the term length of Commissioners from seven to four years and required them to be elected instead of appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. This bill did not pass and later that year, the related referendum failed by over 50,000 votes.

The OPA believes the best process to select PUC Commissioners is through the rigorous and thorough confirmation process, the same process Maine uses to select judges as well as scores of other gubernatorial appointees throughout state government.

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 1452 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate