



PINE TREE POWER

A Vision for the Pine Tree Power Company

In November, Mainers will vote on whether to replace Maine's two investor-owned corporate utilities, Central Maine Power and Versant, with a new nonprofit consumer-owned utility called the Pine Tree Power Company. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a far more affordable, accountable, and reliable utility. This plan is the result of over four years of work with a wide array of stakeholders, examining successful models from within Maine and around the country. Maine is now poised to replace the state's unreliable and expensive investor-owned utilities with a well-run, consumer-owned utility that is responsive to our needs.

The following sections outline...

- 1. Why a consumer owned utility matters for Mainers.**
- 2. How the transition will work.**
- 3. A vision in place to ensure high quality service in the decades ahead.**

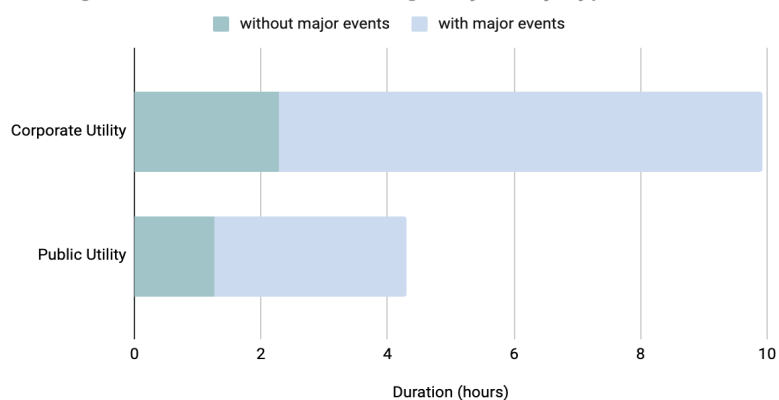
WHY DOES A CONSUMER OWNED UTILITY MATTER?

Pine Tree Power means more reliable service.

CMP and Versant are notorious for their lack of reliable service, with Mainers losing power even on bright, sunny days. Pine Tree Power will emphasize reinvestment in grid resilience, especially distribution infrastructure, instead of sending money to shareholders.

- During blackout events, people with [underlying health conditions](#) can be put in environments that exacerbate problems – for instance, being too hot or too cold, ventilators can go out, or critical refrigerated medications can spoil.
- Investor-owned utilities that are beholden to their shareholders take close to [three times as long](#) to recover service after major outages than publicly-owned utilities.

Average Duration of Electric Outages by Utility Type, 2021



Pine Tree Power means more affordable bills.

CMP and Versant sent shutoff notices to [94,000 Mainers](#), or [13% of customers](#), in the first half of 2023, putting families in the precarious position of potentially losing access to a service vital to survival. Pine Tree Power can provide affordable service for working families and therefore limit the number of Mainers disconnected or in utility debt.

- Many Americans are forced to make a decision between paying utility bills and buying groceries. This can lead to malnourishment, deferred medical care, housing instability, and illness – all of which impact people’s wellbeing.
- On average, residential customers at publicly-owned utilities pay [13% less](#) than corporate utilities. Lowering costs can increase families’ quality of life.

Pine Tree Power means a climate-ready grid.

The climate crisis is an existential threat to life in Maine right now, and CMP and Versant have not taken it seriously. Capturing the excess payments made to shareholders and keeping them in Maine is the key to the state's response. Pine Tree Power will accelerate the transition, creating a climate-ready grid that can bring renewable energy online faster, electrify Maine's transportation system, and respond to the increasing threats to the grid from extreme weather.

- [49% of Maine's carbon emissions](#) come from the transportation sector. A 21st century grid will be crucial to electrifying transportation, and therefore decarbonizing it. .
- Maine has already experienced, and will continue to see, increased risks of [precipitation, high heat, and flooding](#) due to climate change. Many of these climate impacts will impact the grid if not mitigated.

Pine Tree Power means a more accountable utility.

CMP and Versant are responsible first and foremost to their shareholders. Both utilities have foreign owners, with money flowing out of Maine and into Calgary and Spain. That also means that foreign owners have more influence and say in the state of Maine's electricity system than Mainers have themselves. Pine Tree Power will put an end to out-of-state ownership and put Maine customers in the driver's seat. The new company will be managed by an elected and appointed board, and operated by experienced local, unionized workers.

- Customers who live in consumer-owned utility territories [often](#) name that local ownership makes them more accountable.
- CMP's and Versant's parent companies have spent over [\\$35 million](#) to defeat this proposal, which was previously approved by the Maine Legislature — a clear example of their undue influence over political campaigns. In comparison, Pine Tree Power will not have billion-dollar parent companies and will have no need to drown out Mainers' voices.

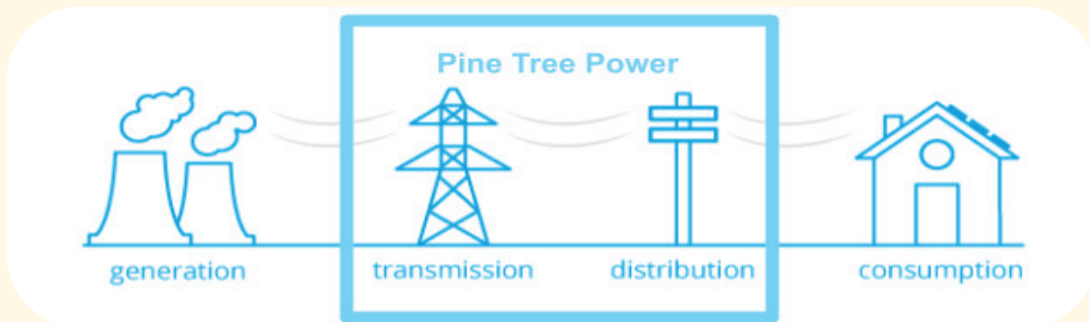


HOW WILL PINE TREE POWER WORK?

What is being transferred to Pine Tree Power?

Our proposal sets out statutory requirements that utilities must adhere to. Versant and CMP have among the lowest customer satisfaction ratings, lowest reliability scores, and highest electricity costs in the United States. They are clearly “unfit to serve” under these new standards. They will no longer be eligible to serve as Maine utilities.

Pine Tree Power will specifically be taking over the ownership, management, and operations of the transmission and distribution grid – the poles, wires, and other hardware. While Pine Tree Power will send out customers’ bills, the company — like the existing utilities — will not own and operate any generation sources like solar or gas-fired power plants. The [standard offer](#) would continue to apply, with Maine customers able to opt into other energy generation, or energy service providers exactly as they do today. In the process of the acquisition, all of the existing agreements and contracts would stay intact and transfer to Pine Tree Power. That means, for instance, net energy metering contracts would stay in place. The contract and obligations transfer also allows for a smooth transition, ensuring that those working with the utilities remain whole. The referendum is also very clear that Pine Tree Power will continue to pay local property taxes, ensuring that no city or town in Maine loses important revenue for their schools or libraries in the process of the transfer. Furthermore, the current employees of CMP and Versant would also continue to be employed under existing union contracts, if applicable.



In the process of the acquisition, all existing agreements and contracts would remain unchanged and transfer to Pine Tree Power. That means, for instance, net energy billing contracts would stay in place for those who have rooftop solar or shares of community solar farms. This allows for a smooth transition, ensuring that those working with the utilities continue to enjoy the benefits of their existing contracts. Pine Tree Power will continue to pay local property taxes, ensuring that no city or town in Maine loses important revenue for their schools or libraries. Furthermore, the current employees of CMP and Versant would continue to be employed under existing union contracts and would even get a retention bonus.

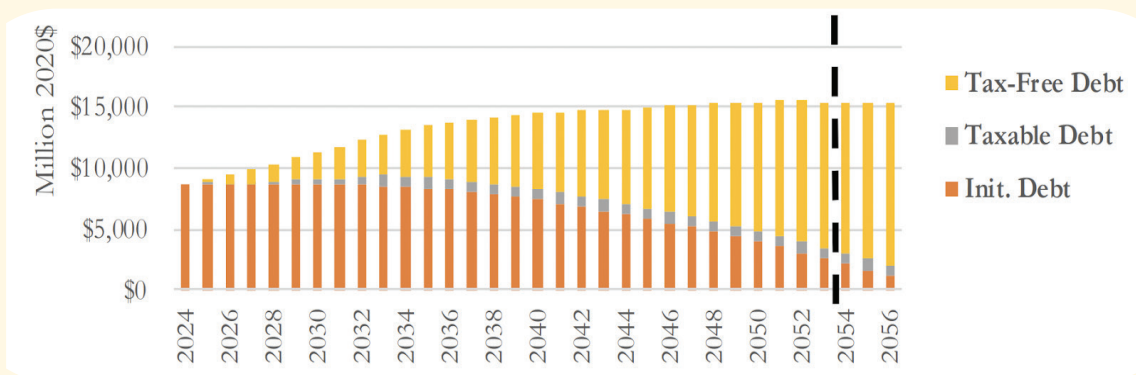
When and how does Pine Tree Power acquire the infrastructure?

Within 12 to 18 months after the referendum passes, the newly-elected Pine Tree Power board will work to evaluate all of the utility facilities and property that is under review for purchase. They'll then determine a fair purchase offer and present it to Versant and CMP. The investor-owned utilities will have the opportunity to return an alternative evaluation for review within a month. In the political campaign over Pine Tree Power, the utilities claim that their assets are worth \$13.5 billion, but Mainers know from official reports they file that for regulatory purposes the utilities only value their assets at [\\$5.4 billion](#). In the event that the parties cannot agree on the asset value, the Superior Court of Kennebec County will determine the purchase price. The law includes safeguards to ensure that the utilities cannot unduly slow down the transfer.

The proposal does not rely on any funding from taxpayers. The purchase of utility infrastructure will be paid via [utility revenue bonds](#). The revenue bonds, available only to public entities, would cover the upfront cost of the capital for acquisition, as well as new investments in Maine's infrastructure. Because there are no shareholders to compensate, Pine Tree Power will cover all these costs and still immediately bring savings, because they will no longer be paying the costs of the debt and profit of CMP and Versant. It is analogous to moving from a high rent to a low-cost mortgage.

According to a [recent analysis](#), Pine Tree Power saves Mainers \$9 billion over 30 years. It is important to note that CMP and Versant are monopolies that are entitled an 8-12% return on their investment. With Pine Tree Power, there is no required return to shareholders — only the cost of municipal bonds which are funded at a rate that is consistently several percentage points lower than the rate paid to utilities. The capital needed to acquire the infrastructure costs less and the cost to consumers over time will stay lower. The combination of lower cost of capital and no need for shareholder payouts allows for Pine Tree Power to achieve significant savings for Mainers.

Pine Tree Power Company Financing



Around \$4 billion in savings come from the regional and national electric grid. Authorities of those grids reimburse utilities for the use of their long distance transmission wires. That reimbursement is at the generous rate demanded by investor-owned utilities. Since Pine Tree Power will have no investors, the difference between that reimbursement rate and the actual cost of capital will be a sizable windfall to the benefit of all Mainers.

How will Pine Tree Operate?

Governing Board

The first step in starting Pine Tree Power is assembling the Governing Board. It is a multi-stakeholder board that blends 7 elected positions with 6 appointed issue experts. Each elected Board member will represent 5 State Senate districts, and they are eligible for Maine Clean Election Act funds for their campaigns. The elected Board will cycle through in staggered 6-year terms to ensure that there continues to be strong institutional knowledge as Pine Tree Power operates and innovates. This is in contrast to the current boards at [Avangrid](#) and [Enmax](#), which have no expertise requirements or avenues for customer accountability.

The appointed issue experts ensure that Pine Tree Power runs as smoothly as possible and has the knowledge of any other board of its kind. The appointees' expertise will collectively cover (1) utility management and finance, (2) utility and worker concerns, (3) industrial consumer concerns, (4) technological expertise in issues like electricity generation, delivery, and cybersecurity, (5) planning for climate change, (6) low income Mainer, economic, and environmental justice concerns. The breadth of the appointed board will help to ensure a healthy balance of consumer representation and expertise.

Staff

Similar to other boards, the Governing Board will play a powerful oversight role. Staff will include a Director, Chief Financial Officer, support staff, and legal counsel. The staff hired by the Pine Tree Power board will be crucial to the planning and transition. The Board will develop robust job descriptions and conduct a wide search to identify and recruit the best candidates with the most outstanding experience in utility management, particularly consumer-owned utility management.

As a consumer-owned utility, Pine Tree Power will work in close collaboration with multiple important Maine state offices including the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of Public Advocate. Their support and advice will also help ensure a smooth transition to a utility that is responsive, transparent, and consumer-oriented.

Operations Team

The staff and Board together will create a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a private Operations Team that will handle the day-to-day management of the utility. The Operations Team will manage not only the maintenance of poles and wires, but also customer service, billing, planning, and regulatory matters. In putting together an RFP, the staff and Board of Pine Tree Power will seek out the most outstanding talent from around the country and will have the resources to offer an attractive benefit package. The Board will prioritize companies with strong track records in customer service, maintenance, and responsiveness to climate policy – attributes lacking with the current investor-owned utilities.

The Operations Team would work hand-in-hand with the Board and staff to develop a five-year plan to increase reliability, affordability, and expand

electrification. As a contracted operations team, the Operations Team must continually demonstrate excellence in handling the management of Pine Tree Power. There will be far more accountability than currently exists in the investor-owned utility model. The Pine Tree Power Board will also reevaluate the relationship with the Operations Team over time, ensuring that the relationship is in the public interest, and conducting a new RFP if the circumstances warrant.

Most employees of Central Maine Power and Versant will not lose their jobs in the transition to Pine Tree Power. In fact, their expertise and knowledge of the grid will be instrumental in ensuring that service continues – and improves. The employees will transfer employment over to the newly-contracted managing company, and with it, their current collective bargaining agreement will stay in place.

Employees get to remain with their existing union and will retain all their rights. This ensures that the transfer to Pine Tree Power continues to support unionized work. In fact, the addition of utility and worker concerns on the Board has the benefit of increasing worker rights and power in the new Pine Tree Power utility. Pine Tree Power will be a union-friendly workplace and the new managing company is barred from eroding the bargaining unit by contracting out core operational services. Furthermore, to support employees during the transition from their previous employer to Pine Tree Power, each will get an 8 percent bonus in the first year of the transition and then a 6 percent bonus in the second.

Utility Accountability

Pine Tree Power will be accountable to its consumers, its workers, and the whole Maine community. This is a large shift from the investor-owned utility model, where the utilities have a legal responsibility to be accountable exclusively to their shareholders rather than their customers. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) will continue to operate as an oversight body, including reviewing and confirming all rate changes. In the case of investor-owned utilities, the jurisdiction of the PUC is limited and many consumers have repeatedly been frustrated that the PUC cannot consider other issues consumers attempt to raise. The transfer to Pine Tree Power allows for far more opportunities and structures for engagement and accountability.

In addition to PUC proceedings, Pine Tree Power will host other forums for feedback and engagement. As a consumer-owned utility, Pine Tree Power will have to comply with [open meeting law](#) requirements. This means that all Board meetings and proceedings would be open to the public with robust records accessible to all. The utility will have to provide audio and/or visual records of the meetings, as well. This is a crucial component to ensuring accountability, replacing the existing model where key decisions affecting all Mainers have been made behind closed doors and sometimes in boardrooms in other countries. The utility will also fall under the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA), which means that additional information beyond the Board meetings could be requested for additional accountability.

In addition, Pine Tree Power could use other engagement and accountability tools like energy town halls, working groups, and canvassing. Energy town halls throughout the state could be a space for Mainers to receive updates

on the utility, get their issues on the agenda, and provide feedback on the strategic future and planning of the utility. Furthermore, there could be specific working groups – with state experts – on issues such as reliability, cybersecurity, affordability, and climate and environmental justice that both work on strategy development and track implementation. Working groups or advisory boards are a well-known and useful tool. For instance, when the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act was passed in New York, they installed a [Climate Justice Working Group](#) to provide strategic advice for the needs of disadvantaged communities. Finally, the utility could also run canvassing projects to hear directly from consumers about their needs and issues. While there, canvassers could also take stock of specific issues that could be fixed on a short term basis for the consumer.

What will Pine Tree Power do?

Provide Resilient, Reliable Electricity Service

Pine Tree Power will improve reliability and create higher levels of electricity resilience in the era of the climate crisis. One of the first things Pine Tree Power will do to improve reliability is to convene the utility’s lineworkers who know the lines better than anyone and determine how and why Maine has some of the worst reliability in the country. The staff and the Operations Team will work together with the workers, to combine both robust reliability data and on-the-ground expertise into a clear plan of action. From there, the utility will empower the line crews to do their job safely and efficiently across the state. And they will have the resources they need due to the absence of corporate profit pressures.

The plan of action will likely include a focus on rebuilding distribution lines in disrepair – especially in vulnerable regions of the state. Lineworkers will install insulated wire upgrades and hardening lines with tree wire or spacer cable systems (tree wiring can ensure that the lines can support some branches without breaking). Massachusetts’s 41 consumer-owned utilities (COUs) provide a good model for investing in distribution infrastructure in order to improve reliability. Most, if not all, of the COUs in Massachusetts use insulated distribution wires in high risk areas, supported by a strong carrying cable. These investments may include a higher cost at the outset but will substantially reduce the cost of foliage removal, repairs, maintenance, and outages in the long term. After focusing on the most critical distribution lines, Pine Tree Power will implement a long-term plan to assess where aging wires will have to be replaced over time.

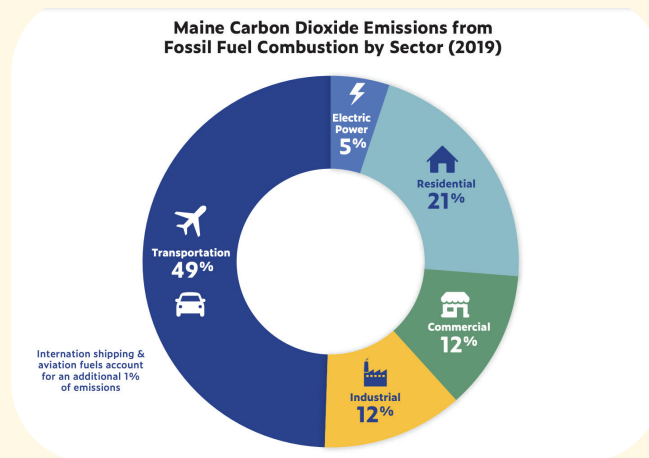
Furthermore, Pine Tree Power will integrate critical climate infrastructure both while upgrading old wires and while delivering new infrastructure necessary for increasing electrification. This includes tools such as microgrids to limit the number of outages, high quality and fast interconnection service to get more renewables and chargers online, small and large scale batteries to keep the grid running, and smart grid technology and efficiency systems to lower the pressure on the grid on the increasing number of high heat days. Microgrids have already provided a boon for communities in New England in ensuring reliability. For instance, in Vermont, the utility implemented a [microgrid for a rural northern region](#) connected to a solar array and batteries after Hurricane Irene to make sure that critical pieces

of infrastructure as well as homes stayed online. Pine Tree Power could work alongside local communities' climate planning teams to coordinate consumer-owned microgrids that support the community. Pine Tree Power will also continue to be part of ISO-NE, which would continue to allow for transfer capacity between Maine and other states. Finally, when and if an ice storm or other weather disaster hits, Pine Tree Power will be eligible for federal disaster relief funding – for which investor-owned utilities are not eligible.

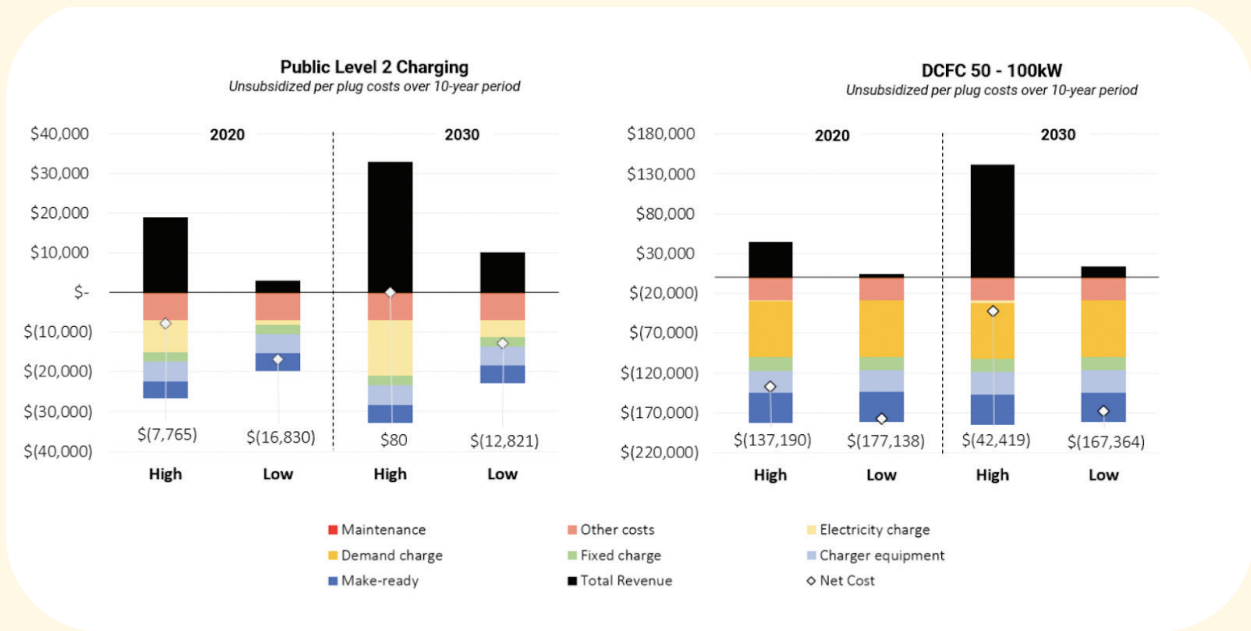
Advance Electrification

Maine's [climate commitments](#) are to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 45% (from 1990 levels) by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and achieve net-zero by 2045. The grid is an indispensable component of any effective plan to decarbonize. As a consumer-owned utility that will cover the majority of the state, Pine Tree Power can work hand-in-hand with the State of Maine to achieve the targets set out in [Maine Won't Wait](#).

There are two core areas where the utility would be a leader on the green transition: (1) electrifying transportation and (2) upgrading buildings from oil and gas to electricity and increasing efficiency.



Transportation is responsible for [49 percent](#) of Maine's emissions. Transitioning from internal combustion engines to electric vehicles, including public transportation, will require expansion of the grid and a connected charging infrastructure. As the rest of the nation transitions, this will also be crucial to continuing Maine's tourism economy as EV owners will expect to easily cross the state and keep their vehicle charged. According to the [2022 update](#) of Maine's climate plan, there are 389 public charging stations in the state – while a good start, creating a networked system will require thousands of plugin opportunities. Pine Tree Power will work with the State of Maine Department of Transportation, the Maine PUC, the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and other relevant offices to design a coordinated plan for where the public charging stations should be located, utilize low-cost or already-existing public land to develop the stations, and ensure that the stations come online in a way that the grid can stay reliable. This will require upfront investment, but also provides Pine Tree Power with a new revenue stream that will be subsidized by the expansive tourism economy. Below is a chart from the [Maine Clean Transportation Roadmap](#) that outlines the potential revenue gains associated with the transportation buildout.



The [2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#) and [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) provide a suite of subsidies available for the next ten years for transportation infrastructure development for which Pine Tree Power and the State of Maine are eligible.

Transitioning buildings off gas and heating oil will require the grid to handle more electricity consumption and generation. As more homeowners also add rooftop solar, batteries, and electric vehicles to their homes, interconnection times will have to accelerate and the hardware must accommodate bi-directional energy. Pine Tree Power will be at the forefront of transitioning these households and buildings, alongside the robust and growing economy of local Maine solar developers and heat pump installers. Unlike the investor-owned utilities currently operating in the state, Pine Tree Power has no parent company that owns oil or gas infrastructure, and therefore no hidden incentive to support those dying industries. Versant and Central Maine Power have consistently failed to provide adequate support for interconnections for solar arrays and have simultaneously charged exorbitant rates for those interconnections. Versant is notorious for charging an average of [almost \\$10,000](#) for upgrades to connect a small array. Pine Tree Power will work with other Maine businesses to support the green economy of building electrification instead of slowing it down.

In addition to electrification, Maine has old and inefficient housing that must be weatherized to lower energy consumption. This is not only good for lowering stress on the grid, but is also critical to lowering electricity bills for residents and businesses. Pine Tree Power will work with key groups in the state like [Efficiency Maine](#) to target homeowners, especially low-income homeowners, to invest in weatherization. Consumer-owned utilities have been at the forefront of some of the best and most equitable [home efficiency programs](#). Much like other consumer-owned utilities, Pine Tree Power, in coordination with Efficiency Maine could implement a [Pay as You Save](#)

[program](#), which makes it financially feasible for homeowners to go green because it requires no up-front payment and no debt obligation from the homeowner and is integrated into their bill. As of October 2021, [Ouachita Electric Cooperative Corporation \(OECC\)](#) in rural Arkansas invested \$3 million in energy efficiency as well as solar energy, serving close to 400 families and 10 commercial facilities.

Ensure People Can Pay Their Bills

Pine Tree Power can save consumers an average of \$367 per year, according to a recent [economic analysis](#). The utility can provide lower costs to consumers because it is a nonprofit and does not have to pay out shareholder dividends and has access to lower-cost capital. In addition to the structural savings associated with a consumer-owned utility, there are additional ways that Pine Tree Power can ensure that Mainers can pay their bills. Pine Tree Power will work with communications experts to create layperson bill descriptions so that everyone can understand their utility bill. The utility will create an easy-to-use and updated portal that makes paying bills and keeping track of energy consumption straightforward.

One of the clearest ways to make sure that no person is unduly burdened with utility costs is to implement a [Percentage Income Payment Program \(PIPP\)](#) for Pine Tree Power customers. A PIPP provides a manageable way for low-income customers and vulnerable populations like the elderly on fixed incomes to continue to get electricity. In this system Pine Tree Power could enroll customers under a certain income in a program to pay a utility bill that is a percentage of their income. Instead of unpredictable bill costs each month, this system ensures that there is a far higher likelihood that the customer can actually pay their bill and do so in a timely manner. This system already exists in [many states](#) including Ohio, Colorado, New Jersey, and Nevada. These programs usually set the percentage somewhere between 4 and 8 percent. There are also other rate structures like a base cost of service under a certain kWh usage that is less expensive, incentivizing customers to be efficient as well as ensuring that Mainers can cover their costs. By incorporating efficiency programs like Pay as You Save described above, Pine Tree Power will be able to help alleviate energy burdens across the state.

Pine Tree Power will also continue to implement a winter shutoff ban to ensure that everyone has access to power during the coldest times of the year. This is a life-saving measure that makes sure that people do not freeze or become stranded in days of extreme cold. In addition to the winter shutoff ban, Pine Tree Power will engage customers and evaluate other strategies to limit disconnections substantially across the state – by either increasing the shutoff ban times of year to include the summer when Maine is increasingly hot, expanding the medical emergency waiver program that currently can only be used 3 months in a year, or implementing other life-saving measures that both ensure energy is treated like a right and that Pine Tree Power has enough revenue to continue operating.

Provide Broadband

As a poles and wires provider, Pine Tree Power is well suited to take on broadband services. Around [85,000 households](#) in Maine still don't have access to reliable internet service. As the world increasingly becomes

online, broadband is a crucial public service. Internet service providers often do not have a profit incentive to reach more rural areas of Maine that are too sparsely populated to invest in the infrastructure and servicing. In comparison, Pine Tree Power will already serve these more rural regions of Maine and can easily expand their service provision to broadband. Furthermore, having high-quality broadband service across Maine can both help to retain workers in Maine who can work remotely, as well as bring in new remote workers. It can also allow new businesses to come into the state, creating new local jobs in rural areas.

Pine Tree Power will cooperate with other stakeholders to develop a broadband service plan, identifying regions or localities that have low quality or no broadband service that align with the utility's existing poles and wires infrastructure that can also support broadband. This could also be integrated with upgrades or replacements to lines, creating cost efficiencies that get customers two service upgrades for the price of one. Many consumer-owned utilities have taken on broadband development to add additional value to their customers. For instance, the consumer-owned utility in [Chattanooga, Tennessee](#) leveraged its existing poles and wires infrastructure to develop a broadband service for its area. The new broadband service provided lower internet costs and provided the entire city with high speed internet access. This became a draw for companies and allowed them to set up shop and grow the local economy.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

Transition from Central Maine Power and Versant to Pine Tree Power was carefully considered to ensure seamless, efficient service. The proposal sets forth a stepwise process that ensures all customers stay connected to electricity over the transfer timeline.

Day 1

- Initiate Board Member election process, candidates consider running.
- Notify CMP and Versant of the intent for acquisition and timeline.
- CMP and Versant continue to operate poles and wires for all customers.

Month 6

- Pine Tree Power Board candidates have declared their candidacies in January 2024, preparing for the election.
- Appropriate state offices review and evaluate existing infrastructure, based on net book value, to determine the price of CMP and Versant assets.

Year 1

- Mainers elect the new Pine Tree Power board members.
- Board coordinates a Listening Tour to understand what people want to be different about their utility in the future.
- Board readies the request for proposal (RFP) for the management company, creating an evaluation matrix with feedback from the PUC, Town Halls, and consumer-owned utilities.
- Board readies a detailed Business Plan that includes affordability, reliability, and climate security.
- Board creates a “Plumb Book” of the different positions that will need to be held as staff for the new Pine Tree Power Company.

Year 2

- Board send CMP and Versant the transfer agreement with the cost, to which the investor-owned utilities respond. In the event that a price cannot be reached, the price will be set in the Superior Court of Kennebec County.
- Board circulates RFP for the management company, coordinating a robust search.
- Board hires full time staff including a Director, Chief Financial Officer, support staff, and legal counsel.

Year 3

- Board hires a management company that will service all of Pine Tree Power’s territory efficiently and with high quality service.
- Board, staff, and management company assemble working groups on issue areas to contribute to the 5 year plan.
- PUC reviews the operations contract to ensure that the management company decided upon is in the public interest.
- Board, staff, and management company run Town Halls throughout the state to receive feedback on the 5 year plan.
- Board and staff work with the management company to review and align the strategic 5 year plan.

Year 4

- Pine Tree Power begins operating in earnest, with all assets officially transferred over to the new utility.
- Board and staff support management company in coordinating with relevant state offices to achieve affordability, reliability, and climate goals.
- Management company initiates a canvassing system to evaluate the different regions and speak face-to-face with their new customers—both introducing themselves and identifying issues or problems.
- Management company implements the 5 year strategic plan, with oversight from the board and staff.

CONCLUSION

Pine Tree Power will be a utility that works for its customers, not shareholders in faraway countries. The vision outlined in this report shows a pathway from acquisition to implementation for the new consumer-owned utility in the state of Maine. It shows how Pine Tree Power will create economic opportunity and reinvest in the state of Maine; upgrade Maine's grid for the 21st century so that it is ready to take on stronger winds and electrify massive parts of the state's economy; and provide savings and ensure that everyone has access to affordable electricity, especially those most vulnerable.

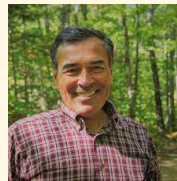
The future laid out in this report is possible and in the hands of Mainers. This November, Maine voters can decide to create one of the most accountable, reliable, and climate-friendly utilities in the country.

Signed by the original citizen petitioners



Wayne Jortner, Freeport

Wayne Jortner is a former attorney with Maine's Office of the Public Advocate. As Senior Counsel, he spent 23 years representing utility consumers in the State of Maine before the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the Maine Supreme Court and the Federal Communications Commission.



Rick Bennett, Oxford

Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford was the lead Senate sponsor of LD 1708. He has served in the Maine Legislature for 15 years in both the Senate and House, including as Senate President. Sen. Bennett currently serves on the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and the Government Oversight Committee. He is currently President and CEO of ValueEdge Advisors and has served on the boards of Maine Conservation Voters, Maine Heritage Policy Center, and Hebron Academy. As a business leader, he has directed or helped the turnarounds of several Maine enterprises including GWI and Quoddy. He received his B.A. with honors from Harvard University in 1986 and his M.B.A. from the University of Southern Maine in 2000.





John Clark, Linneus

John Clark is the former General Manager of Houlton Water Company, a capacity he served in for 33 years. He is a recipient of Maine Water Utilities Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, and past President of the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator, past President of the Dirigo Electric Cooperative, and past President of the Northeast Public Power Association. He studied engineering at Maine Maritime Academy and business and engineering at Northeastern University, a background that complemented his career in utility operations.



Bill Dunn, Yarmouth

Bill Dunn is a consultant based in Yarmouth with over 50 years of experience in the electricity industry and has advised clients of all utility ownership types (i.e., public, private, local and federal) worldwide (25+ countries) and throughout the US. He specializes in electricity market design and implementation, ancillary services, utility and power pool/market operations, inter-utility coordination, contractual power supply arrangements, and transmission access and pricing.



Nicole Grohoski, Ellsworth

Senator Nicole Grohoski of Ellsworth is serving her first term in the Maine Senate and previously served two terms in the House, as a member of the Legislature's Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee and cosponsor of LD 1708. She is a GIS specialist and cartographer and holds a degree in environmental studies and chemistry from Middlebury College. Sen. Grohoski sponsored a first-in-the-nation law to shift the burden of managing packaging waste from taxpayers to packaging producers. She is a member of the Science and Technical Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council and the first graduate of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics to serve in the Maine Legislature.



Ania Wright, Bar Harbor

Ania Wright is a leading figure in youth climate activism in Maine. She serves as the Youth Representative to the Maine Climate Council, works as the Grassroots Climate Organizer for the Sierra Club Chapter of Maine, is a founding member of the youth-led coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, and is a sitting board member of Maine Climate Action Now!. She recently graduated from College of the Atlantic with a B.A. in Human Ecology.

