

**MAINE PUC PUBLIC COMMENT
OF Brian Parke
Docket No. 2024-00137
COMMISSION INITIATED INVESTIGATION
FOLLOW-ON PROCEEDING TO FURTHER
INVESTIGATE STRANDED COST RATE DESIGN**



On behalf of the Maine Motor Transport Association, we offer comments relative to Maine PUC Document Number 2024-00137. The association is comprised of more than 1,840-member companies, whose employees make up a large portion of the 34,000 people who make their living in the trucking industry in Maine.

We applaud the Commission for its recognition of the problem and its willingness to address it in a thoughtful, comprehensive and equitable way. We have heard concerns from a number of our members, especially those with manufacturing operations, since the recent implementation of the stranded cost charge on monthly electric bills and we have encouraged them to submit comments as well so you can hear their concerns first-hand.

The one thing we haven't heard from our members, however, is that there is any opposition to the concept of renewable energy or solar in particular. The sense that I get is that the objection is to their businesses paying significantly higher energy costs to subsidize renewable energy – specifically the implementation of the considerable stranded cost recovery fees.

Businesses cannot be expected to shoulder such huge financial impacts for public policies that, while well intentioned, have obvious unintended consequences. We do not believe that a family operated mill in Aroostook County was meant to pay an additional \$9,694 *per month* in a static "Public Policy Charge", effectively increasing their energy expense by almost 80%. But that is one reality and there are many more examples like this that require the attention of this proceeding and the continued attention of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

MMA's overall concern, separate from the concerns you will hear from our individual members, is the impact these huge energy cost increases will have on Maine employers, their competitiveness and eventually their ability to provide the jobs that everyone wants to protect. Like you, we are disheartened to see news stories, like a recent one in the Bangor Daily News, that report the distinct possibility of operational closures due to the size and projected longevity of such cost increases. As the state's trucking trade association, we would like to see robust economic activity producing freight for our members to move. Staggering increases in energy costs produce the opposite effect.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and for your work to find a reasonable solution.