

PROTECT MAINERS AND LOWER SKYROCKETING UTILITY COSTS

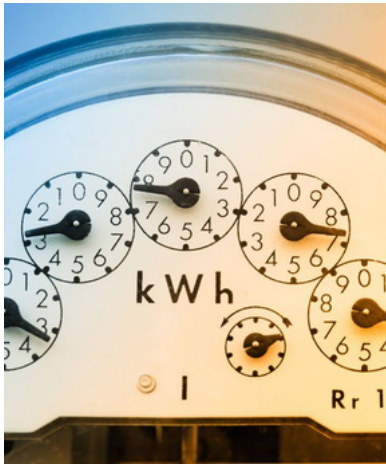
Fight for the rights of Maine families to be free from dangerous service shutoffs, utility profiteering, and predatory advertising.

Extreme weather, the soaring price of natural gas, and current utility policies have made electricity unaffordable for too many Maine people.

- In 2023, Maine electric utilities sent out 440,000 disconnection notices to Maine families -- while making more than \$200 million in profit.
- Low-income Mainers spend 14% of their income on household energy costs, more than twice what is considered affordable.
- Over the past five years, Maine had the fastest-rising electricity costs in the nation. Volatile natural gas prices, climate-fueled storm damage, and utility profit structure have been primary drivers of these increases.



It's long past time for everyone in Maine to have the energy they need to reach their potential.



- Maine is at a critical inflection point, where we must invest to make our electric grid cleaner and more resilient, while also making energy more affordable for families and small businesses.
- Universal access to electricity is imperative to a just transition to a clean economy and to meeting our statutory climate goals.
- Transitioning to clean electricity through Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard has already resulted in enormous investment and \$21.5 million annually in ratepayer benefits, yet low-income Mainers remain vulnerable.
- Electric utilities can't disconnect customers during the winter or extreme weather, but vulnerable populations including older people and infants have no year-round protections, and those with chronic illness can lose access to medically-necessary electricity after a three month period.

Maine can take big steps to lower bills and fight for universal electricity access by addressing the real drivers of rising costs: utility greed and climate change.

- This bill would expand protections from utility disconnection to include older people, infants, and those with chronic medical conditions -- because no one should have to choose between keeping the lights on and securing food and medicine.
- It would require utilities to report data on disconnections and customer debt, providing the public and policymakers the information we need to fight for universal electricity access.
- The bill would also ensure that competitive electricity providers cannot trick low-income customers into higher rates with predatory advertising.
- This measure lowers Maine families' bills by establishing new fairness and affordability standards that refund excessive utility profits to customers.



Establish energy rights. Lower costs and protect Maine people.

For more information, please contact
Lucy Hochschartner, Maine Conservation Voters, at (518) 637-7839 or lucy@maineconservation.org



Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is an inclusive statewide alliance of 39 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.



Acadia Center



Conservation Law Foundation



Friends of Casco Bay
Casco BAYKEEPER

Gateway Community Services Maine



Immigrant Welcome Center
GREATER PORTLAND



MAINE AUDUBON



MIDCOAST CONSERVANCY

