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**Testimony Neither for nor Against
LD 1724, “An Act to Enact the Beneficial Electrification Policy Act”
May 2, 2023**

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

My name is William Harwood, here today as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 1724, “An Act to Enact the Beneficial Electrification Policy Act.”

The OPA very much appreciates the focus on beneficial electrification and its importance in reaching our climate goals. It is critical that we continue to work on cost effective ways to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels for transportation and heating. In order for this strategy to work, however, we must also focus on cost effective ways to reduce our dependence on burning natural gas to generate electricity. Currently, approximately 50% of electricity in New England is generated from natural gas. We must not only expand the use of electricity for transportation and heating, but we must also find ways to reduce the percentage of electricity generated from fossil fuels.

In addition, I was surprised to see references to SOP/CEP billing and “on bill financing” by Transmission and Distribution (T&D) utilities included in the bill. It is unfortunate that this controversial proposal to advance this CEP agenda found its way into this important bill. Currently CMP and Versant have their hands full trying to find a way to make their billing systems work for Net Energy Billing. It would not be helpful to add to this challenge issues such as “on bill” financing. And, I have serious reservations about pushing CMP or Versant into the role of lending \$ to ratepayers, similar to a bank. Let’s keep CMP and Versant focused on keeping the lights on and keeping rates affordable. I strongly recommend deleting these references in the bill.



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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 1724 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