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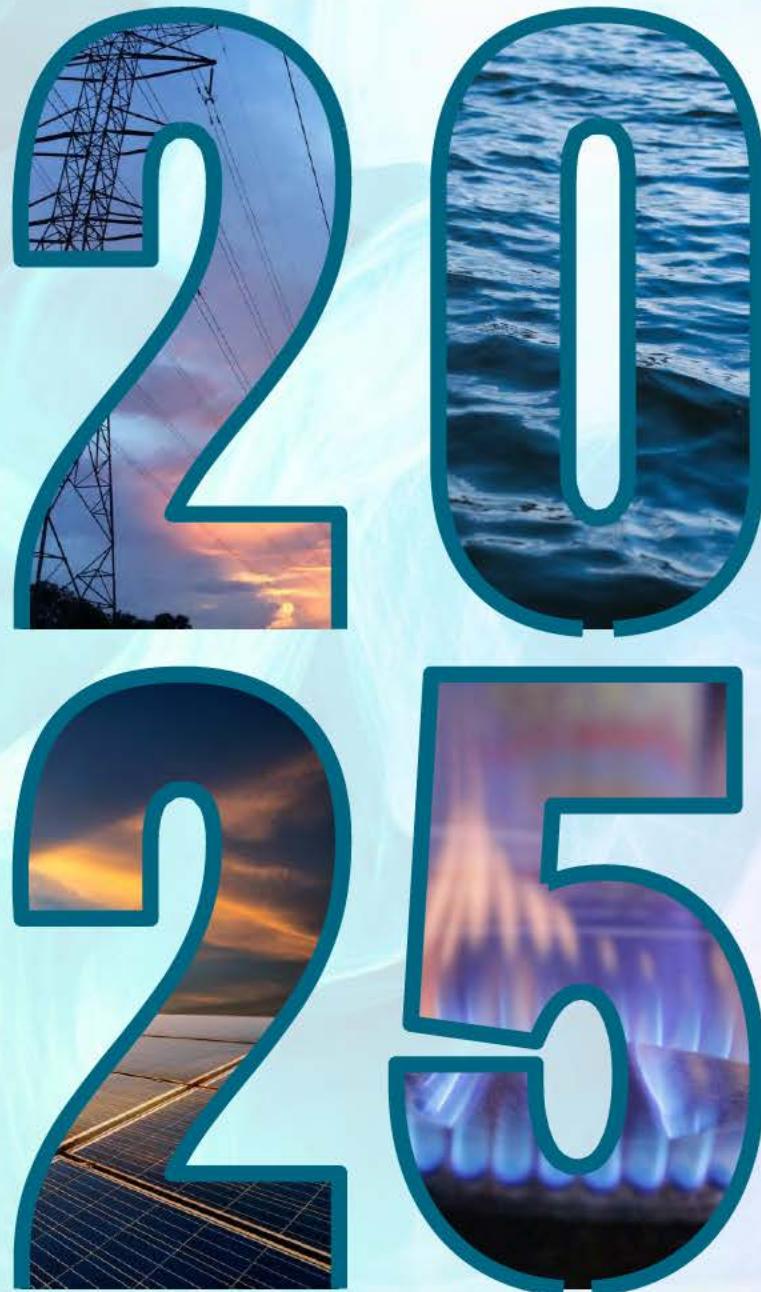


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# State of Maine Public Utilities Commission

## ANNUAL REPORT



February 1, 2026

# Maine Public Utilities Commission

**Chair** Philip L. Bartlett II

**Commissioner** Patrick J. Scully

**Commissioner** Carolyn C. Gilbert



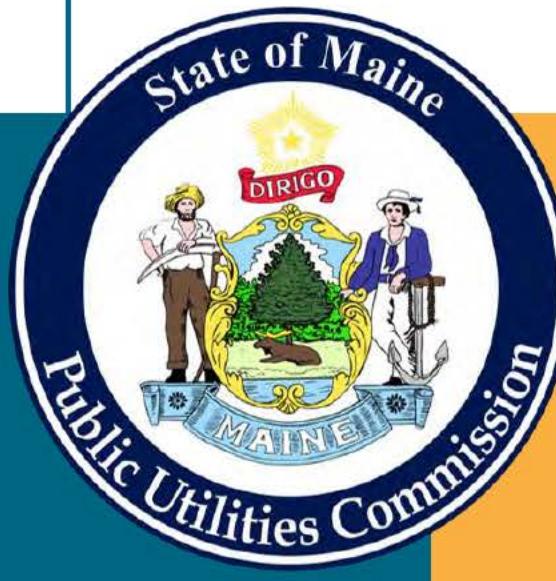
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## Commissioners

**Philip L. Bartlett II**  
Chair

**Patrick J. Scully**  
Commissioner

**Carolyn C. Gilbert**  
Commissioner

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## Letter from the Commissioners

As Commissioners of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, we are pleased to provide this brief overview of the Commission's work in 2025 administering and enforcing Maine's public utilities laws. Our mission remains focused on ensuring safe, reliable utility service at just and reasonable rates, while supporting the State's broader energy, environmental, and economic policy goals.

Throughout 2025, the Commission addressed a wide range of complex issues that directly affect Maine residents and businesses.

In one of the year's most closely followed proceedings, the Commission dismissed Central Maine Power Company's proposed distribution rate increase. The decision followed a detailed review and was grounded in statutory requirements, and we emphasized that proposed rate plans must include strong accountability and customer protections.

Beyond the CMP case, the Commission evaluated multiple filings related to storm recovery costs, reliability metrics, and long-term investment planning to ensure that electric utilities maintain safe, dependable service while keeping rates fair.

Several proceedings addressed Maine's distributed generation laws and solar incentive programs. The Commission worked to balance ratepayer impacts with support for renewable energy development as Maine continues transitioning to a cleaner energy future.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator completed its annual review of numbering resources and confirmed that Maine's 207 area code—an issue of substantial public interest—is now projected to remain viable until approximately 2050, delaying the need for a second area code for decades.

Many water utilities sought approval for infrastructure investments to ensure safe, reliable drinking water. The Commission evaluated these requests to ensure sound financial planning and long-term system sustainability.

Across all proceedings, the Commission remained committed to transparency, accessibility, and rigorous analysis. We held numerous public meetings, technical conferences, and stakeholder sessions, while continuing to enhance online resources to help Mainers better understand the regulatory process.

As Maine navigates evolving energy, telecommunications, and infrastructure challenges, the Commission remains firmly committed to fulfilling its statutory responsibilities with diligence, fairness, and integrity.

With regards,

Philip L. Bartlett II  
Chair

Patrick J. Scully  
Commissioner

Carolyn C. Gilbert  
Commissioner

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section highlights some of the more noteworthy cases and initiatives in 2025.

Topic	Description
<b>CMP Rate Case</b>	Central Maine Power Company (CMP) filed a five-year rate plan in 2025. The Commission dismissed the case in November, citing concerns about the pace of the proposed investments, lack of a long-term integrated grid plan, and potential impacts on ratepayers.
<b>Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program</b>	The Commission issued a Request for Proposals to achieve investment in renewable generation in northern Maine and in transmission infrastructure needed to deliver power to Maine consumers and regional markets. Prior to the RFP, the Commission issued a Request for Information to gather input from developers, stakeholders, and other interested parties to help inform the RFP. This initiative supports Maine's renewable energy development.
<b>207 Area Code</b>	The Commission continues to monitor and plan for the 207 area code to ensure adequate numbering resources for Maine residents and businesses. The North American Numbering Plan Administrator projects the exhaustion of the 207 area code to be in 2050, making it one of the longest-running single area codes in the nation.
<b>Standard Offer Electric Supply</b>	The Commission approved Standard Offer Electric supply contracts for 2026, resulting in rate increases for CMP and Versant Power (Versant) customers ranging from \$11-16 per month for an average residential customer, depending on utility. The increases are primarily driven by market conditions, particularly the cost of natural gas.
<b>LIAP Program</b>	The Commission approved significant amendments to its statewide Low-income Assistance Program rules, expanding eligibility permanently to customers qualified by DHHS with household incomes up to 150% of the federal poverty level, increasing funding to \$33 Million, and transitioning the program to a more stable and predictable bill discount model for participating CMP and Versant customers.
<b>Versant Power Management Audit</b>	In 2025, the Commission opened a formal investigation into Versant to address deficiencies identified in prior proceedings and a recent audit. The review is focused on operations, reliability, customer service, and management controls. The investigation remains active.
<b>Water Utility Outreach</b>	The Commission continued targeted outreach to rural water utilities to address the financial challenges associated with replacing aging infrastructure, particularly for small, consumer-owned systems that are often managed by volunteer boards. Commission staff provided guidance on planning, funding options, and regulatory processes and training to support efficient operations and to ensure rates remain just and reasonable.

### 3. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Commission regulates electric, gas, telephone and water utilities to ensure that Maine citizens have access to safe and reliable utility services at rates that are just and reasonable for residential and business consumers and public utilities, while also helping achieve reductions in state greenhouse gas emissions.

The Commission, created by the Maine Legislature in 1913, has broad powers to regulate these public utilities in Maine. The Commission also responds to customer questions and complaints, grants utility operating authority, regulates utility service standards, monitors utility operations for safety and reliability, and has authority over rates and service of ferry transportation in Casco Bay.

Like a court, the Commission adjudicates cases and may take testimony, subpoena witnesses and records, issue decisions or orders, and holds public and evidentiary hearings. The Commission encourages participation by all affected parties, including utility customers and the public. The Commission also conducts investigations and rulemakings, investigates allegations of illegal utility activity, and responds to legislative directives.

The Commission handles an average of about 350 utility cases a year. In 2025 the Commission opened 375 new cases. This year included a major rate case and procurements requiring significant staff time as well as consulting expertise. Many of these large cases are detailed in the Executive Summary.

The three full-time Commissioners are nominated by the Governor, reviewed by the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, and confirmed by the full Senate, for staggered terms of six years. The Governor designates one Commissioner as Chair. The Commissioners make all final Commission decisions by public vote and action of the majority.

The legislature authorized an additional two positions in the last legislative session, increasing the Commission's staff from 78 to 80. This includes accountants, engineers, lawyers, financial analysts, technical analysts, consumer specialists, administrative and support staff. The Commission's knowledgeable and dedicated staff work tirelessly on behalf of the people of Maine to keep utility rates reasonable. The current staffing level is detailed in the chart below.

Functional Area	Employees
Administrative Division and Commissioners	14
Consumer Assistance and Safety Division	21
Electric and Gas Division	15
Emergency Services Communications Bureau	10
Legal Division	14
Telephone and Water Division	6
<b>Total Current Employees</b>	<b>80</b>

The Commission is divided into six operating areas according to functional area.

**Electric and Gas Division; Telephone and Water Division** staff conduct technical and financial investigations and analyses of telephone, water, electric and gas utility operations, analyze applications by utilities to issue securities, advise the Commissioners on matters of rate base, revenues, expenses, depreciation, cost of capital, engineering, rate design, energy science, statistics and other technical elements of these utility areas. Staff also conduct various supply procurement processes, including standard offer electricity supply service.

**Emergency Services Communication Bureau** staff manage the statewide Enhanced 911 system, including program development and implementation. The statewide 911 system is the component of the emergency response system that delivers 911 calls and displays the telephone number and physical location of the caller at one of Maine's 24 Public Safety Answering Points.

**Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (CASD)** staff provide information and assistance to utility customers to help them resolve disputes with utilities. The CASD investigates a variety of complaints involving utility service, including quality of utility service, billing disputes, payment arrangements, rates or charges, disconnection, and utility repairs. The CASD also educates the public and utilities about consumer rights and responsibilities, evaluates utility compliance with state statutes and Commission rules, and oversees gas safety regulation and enforcement statewide as well as underground facilities damage prevention.

**Legal Division** staff provide hearing officers in cases before the Commission and assist in preparing and presenting Commission testimony on legislative proposals. This division represents the Commission before federal and state appellate and trial courts, and various regional and federal administrative and regulatory agencies.

**Administrative Division** staff handle day-to-day operational management of the Commission, with responsibilities for fiscal and personnel matters, contract and docket management, legislative analysis, media and communications and the Commission's facilities. This division also oversees information technology including the Commission's Case Management and Consumer Complaint System.

## 4. ELECTRIC

### Electric Industry Overview

Maine's electricity system consists of two primary components: delivery and supply. Delivery includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of both high-voltage transmission and lower-voltage distribution facilities as well as metering and billing. Supply covers the production and provision of electric energy and capacity. Because supply is not a monopoly service, it is provided by competitive entities operating in regional and state wholesale and retail markets with comparatively limited oversight.

### Electric Restructuring, Incentive Rulemaking, and Infrastructure Reporting

As required under 35-A M.R.S. §§ 3217, 3195(5), and 3143, this section fulfills the Commission's reporting obligations for electric restructuring, electric incentive rulemaking, and grid infrastructure.

### Retail Electricity Supply

Approximately 270 licensed Competitive Electricity Providers (CEPs) currently supply Maine's retail electricity load. This total includes Maine's Standard Offer suppliers, who serve 40–50% of the state's customers through default service. The remaining load is served by non-Standard-Offer CEPs.

### Electric Delivery

Delivery rates include three components:

- Transmission – the cost of the regional high-voltage transmission grid, regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).
- Distribution – the cost of local delivery over utility-owned distribution networks, regulated by the Commission.
- Stranded Costs – charges that recover above-market costs remaining from pre-restructuring utility investments. Although not stranded costs as defined in statute, policy costs associated with long-term energy contracts and net energy billing programs are also recovered through stranded cost rates.

### Regional Power System

The majority of Maine is part of the Independent System Operator – New England (ISO-NE) regional bulk power market and transmission system. The exception is northern Maine, which is not electrically connected to ISO-NE. The Northern Maine grid operates through its connection to the New Brunswick Power system and is administered by the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator (NMISA).

Maine consumers use roughly 11.34 million MWh of electricity annually, with a peak demand of about 2,000 MW. In-state generation totals approximately 5,252 MW of nameplate capacity. These resources operate according to ISO-NE dispatch, running at full output when needed and standing idle when demand or market conditions do not require them.

## **Commission Responsibilities**

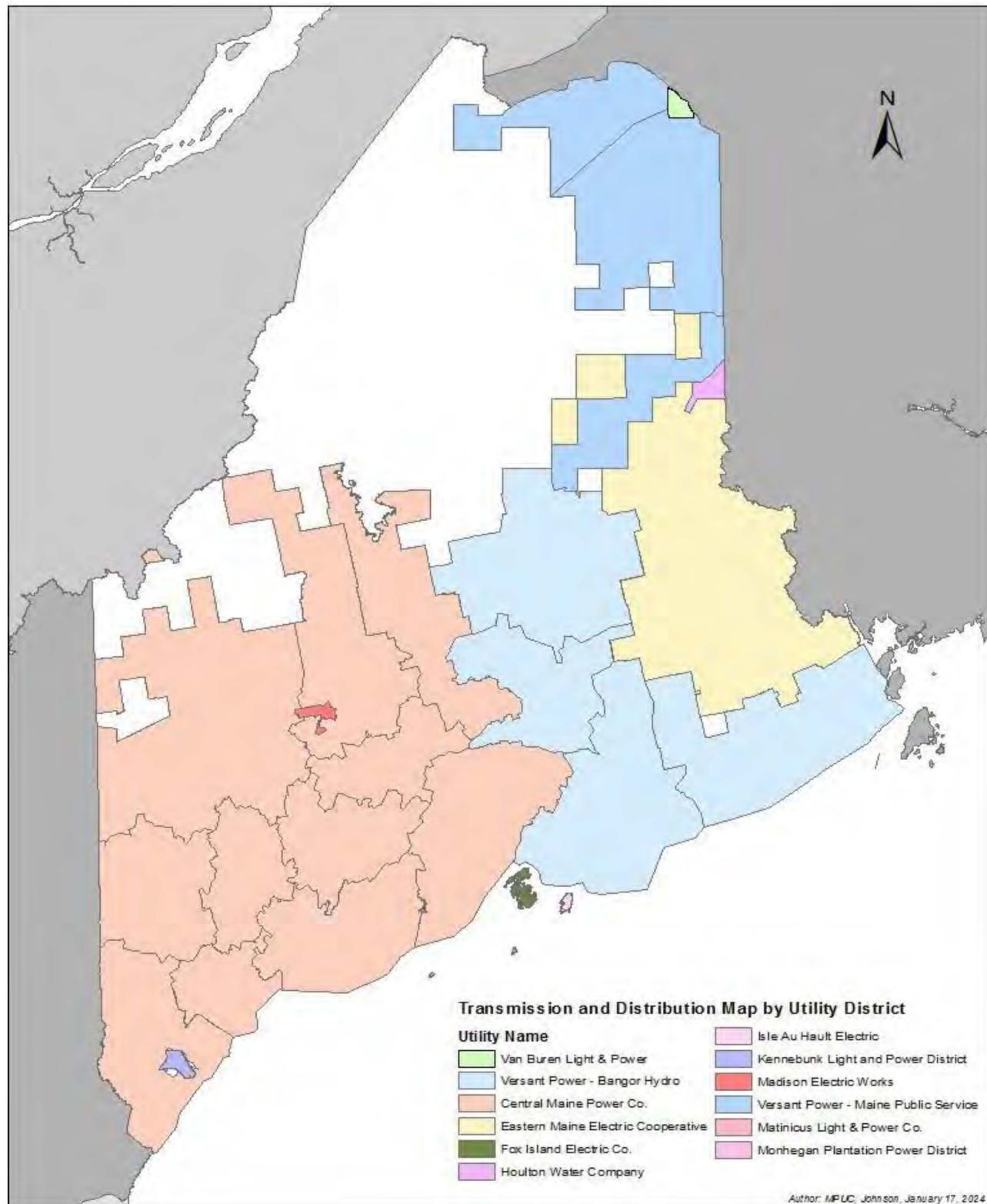
The Commission:

- Regulates distribution rates and operations of Maine's transmission and distribution (T&D) utilities (transmission rates are regulated by FERC).
- Licenses retail competitive electricity suppliers (CEP) and marketers and oversees the state's retail electric market.
- Administers competitive procurement for Standard Offer service and other legislatively directed power supply procurements.
- Monitors regional wholesale markets and advocates for Maine consumers before ISO-NE, NMISA, and FERC.

### **Transmission and Distribution Utilities**

Maine has 12 T&D utilities: two investor-owned utilities—Central Maine Power (CMP) and Versant Power (Versant)—and ten consumer-owned utilities. CMP and Versant together serve approximately 95% of statewide electric load. Figure 1 provides a map of each utility's service territory.

**Figure 1 – T&D Service Areas**



## **MARKET TRENDS AND CONSUMER PRICES**

### **Wholesale Electricity Market**

Wholesale electricity market costs to Maine consumers for the period December 2024 to November 2025 were \$831,514,963. This is an approximately 68% increase from the \$493,712,044 in market costs for the prior twelve-month period. The increased electricity costs were primarily a result of the higher natural gas prices and increased demand.

### **Day-Ahead Ancillary Services Initiative (DASI)**

For rates calculated in this report, there is a new charge for daily reserve products referred to as "DASI". ISO NE now purchases, on a day ahead basis, four spinning and non-spinning reserve hourly products during the process it procures day ahead hourly energy from generators (product volumes calculated for each operating hour based on their load forecast and outage schedules for the next day). This product is intended to provide reliability for "real time" system failures during any operating hour (as opposed to capacity services which are not intended for daily reliability but instead "peak seasonal" system needs. This new product is intended to provide better tailored reliability each operating day (based on actual system conditions) while theoretically reducing the clearing price of the actual day ahead cost of electricity.

### **Retail Supply Prices and Standard Offer Procurement**

#### **Case No. 2025-00157 Standard Offer Electricity Supply for 2026**

In November 2025, the Commission accepted competitive bids and set the 2026 standard offer electricity supply rates for customers of CMP, Versant–Bangor Hydro District (BHD), and Versant–Maine Public District (MPD).

- CMP: The rate for residential and small-business customers rises from 10.61¢ per kWh in 2025 to 12.72¢ per kWh in 2026. This change will add roughly \$11 per month for a typical household using 550 kWh.
- Versant – BHD: The rate for residential and small-business customers rises from 10.56¢ per kWh in 2025 to 12.95¢ per kWh in 2026. This change will add roughly \$11 per month for a typical household using 500 kWh.
- Versant – MPD: The standard offer rate increases from 11.65¢ per kWh to 14.87¢ per kWh. For a residential customer using 500 kWh/month, this translates to a roughly \$16 a month increase.

These increases reflect sharp rises in wholesale energy costs, particularly due to elevated natural gas prices and broader regional market conditions.

Because the standard offer supply component accounts for a significant share of total bills (about 40–50%, depending on utility), many Maine households and small businesses will see noticeable increases starting January 1, 2026.

**Table 1: New England Investor-Owned Utility Fixed Residential Supply Rates as of December 2025**

<b>State</b>	<b>Average Price</b>	<b>Lowest Price</b>	<b>Highest Price</b>
Maine	13.513	12.720	14.870
Connecticut	13.168	12.641	13.695
Massachusetts	14.441	13.119	15.372
New Hampshire	12.366	11.303	13.735
Rhode Island	14.770*		
Vermont**	21.457*		
New England	14.140	11.303	21.457

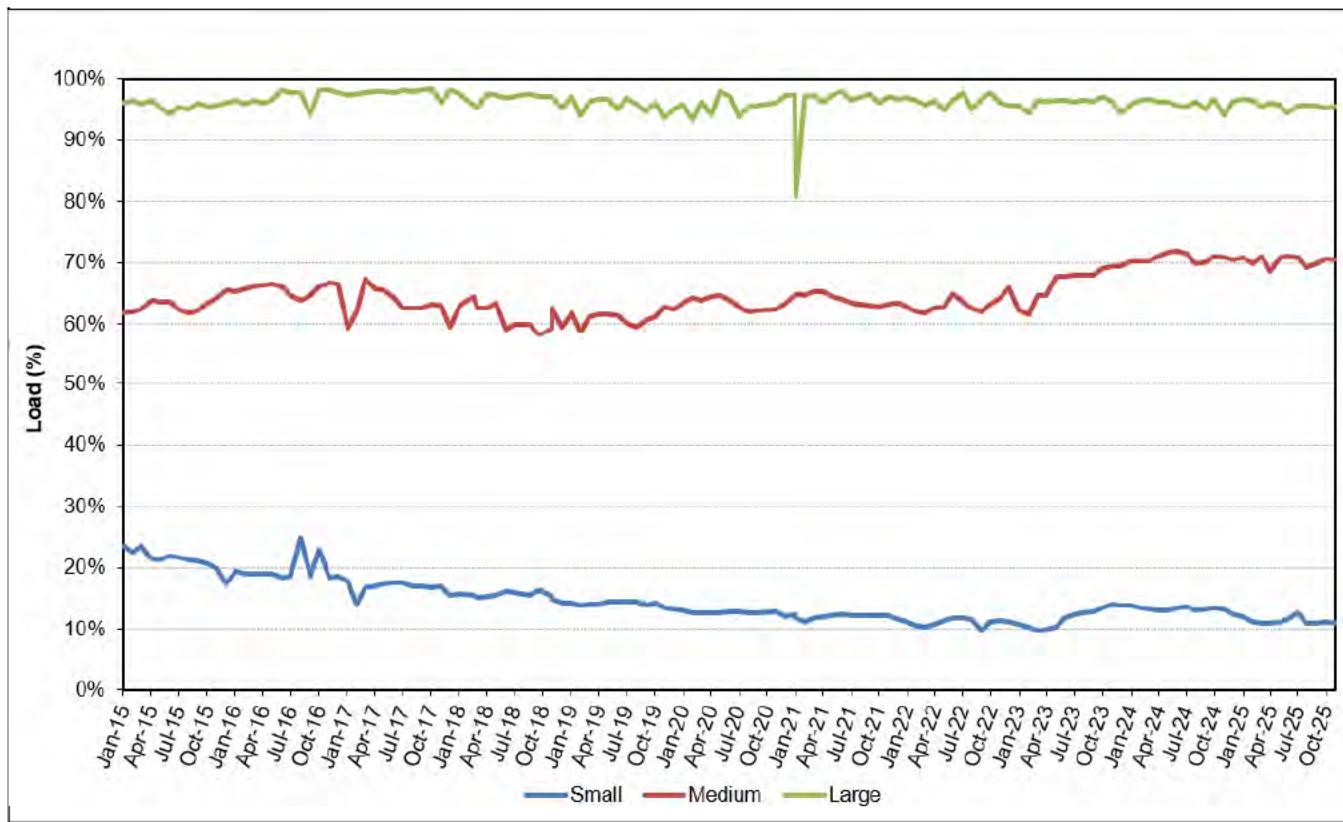
\*Rhode Island and Vermont have only one investor-owned utility and therefore the average price is the price of that single utility.

\*\*Rates reported by Green Mountain Power of Vermont include supply and delivery.

### **Retail Supply Market Activity**

Since March 2000, consumers in Maine have had the option of selecting their electricity supplier. For many years there was a robust market throughout most of Maine for medium and large commercial and industrial (C&I) customers, but virtually none for residential and small commercial customers. Beginning in 2012, however, the percentage of residential and small commercial customers served by a CEP increased significantly, peaking at 35% in mid-2013. Since that time, the amount of residential and small commercial supply served by CEPs has declined gradually to its current level of about 11%. Chart 1 below shows customers served by CEPs. In short, most large businesses use a CEP, while most residential and small business customers utilize standard offer for their electricity supply.

## Chart 1 – Customers Served by Competitive Electric Providers



In 2025 retail competition remained weak in northern Maine due to its electrical isolation from a functional wholesale market. This isolation has hindered the retail market from developing in this part of the state since retail access began in 2000.

### Utility Delivery Service Rates

Delivery service rates include distribution, transmission, stranded cost, and Efficiency Maine Trust assessment components. Current retail rates for Maine residential consumers as of January 1, 2026, for all electric utilities in Maine are summarized in Table 2 below.

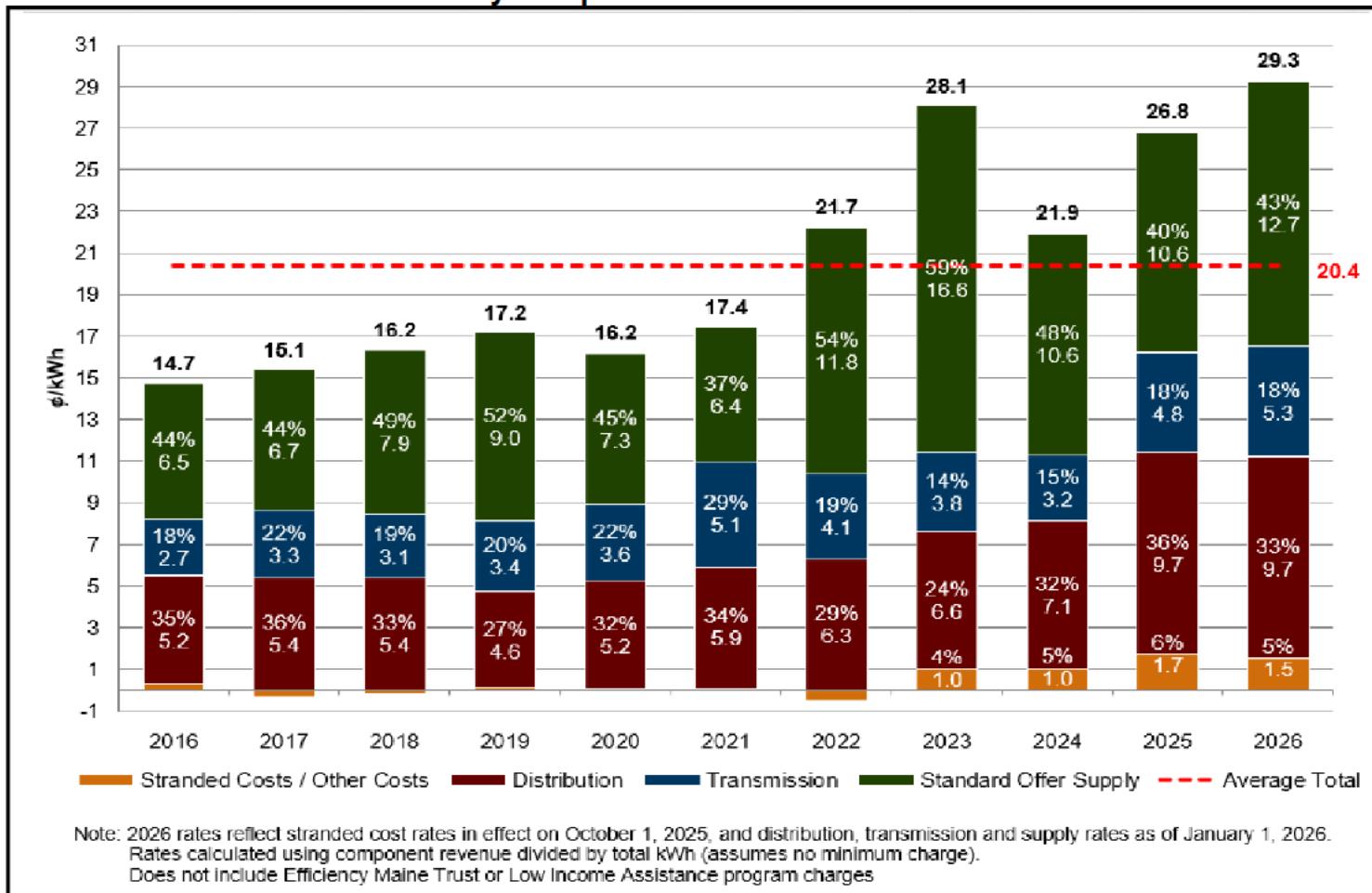
**Table 2 – Residential Electricity Rates**

RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICITY RATES IN MAINE <sup>1</sup>							
	% of State Residential Load	kWh	Delivery Rate			Standard Offer Rate	Total Rate
			T&D ¢/kWh	Stranded Cost ¢/kWh	Total Delivery ¢/kWh	¢/kWh	¢/kWh
<b>INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES</b>							
Central Maine Power	78.5%	3,660,694,909	15.9	1.5	17.5	12.7	<b>30.2 ¢/kWh</b>
Versant Power - BHD	13.4%	627,002,960	18.7	2.1	20.8	13.0	<b>33.7 ¢/kWh</b>
Versant Power - MPD	3.9%	180,115,287	15.3	2.2	17.4	14.9	<b>32.3 ¢/kWh</b>
<b>COOPERATIVES &amp; MUNICIPAL-OWNED UTILITIES</b>							
Brunswick Landing	0.0%	875,314	13.7	N/A	13.7	12.3	<b>26.0 ¢/kWh</b>
Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative	1.4%	65,113,128	11.2	N/A	11.2	5.9	<b>17.1 ¢/kWh</b>
Houlton	0.7%	34,513,808	5.7	N/A	5.7	6.2	<b>11.9 ¢/kWh</b>
Van Buren	0.2%	8,154,636	7.1	N/A	7.1	6.2	<b>13.3 ¢/kWh</b>
Kennebunk Light & Power	1.3%	58,749,202	2.9	N/A	2.9	11.2	<b>14.1 ¢/kWh</b>
Madison Electric Works	0.4%	19,455,461	4.3	N/A	4.3	15.4	<b>19.7 ¢/kWh</b>
Matinicus	0.0%	192,818	Exempt from Standard Offer requirements			51.4	<b>51.4 ¢/kWh</b>
Monhegan	0.0%	420,538	Exempt from Standard Offer requirements			83.1	<b>83.1 ¢/kWh</b>
Fox Island	0.2%	7,361,207	19.6	N/A	19.6	16.6	<b>36.2 ¢/kWh</b>
Isle au Haut	0.0%	189,987	15.2	N/A	15.2	16.8	<b>32.0 ¢/kWh</b>
<b>STATE AVERAGE</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,662,839,255</b>					<b>30.2 ¢/kWh</b>

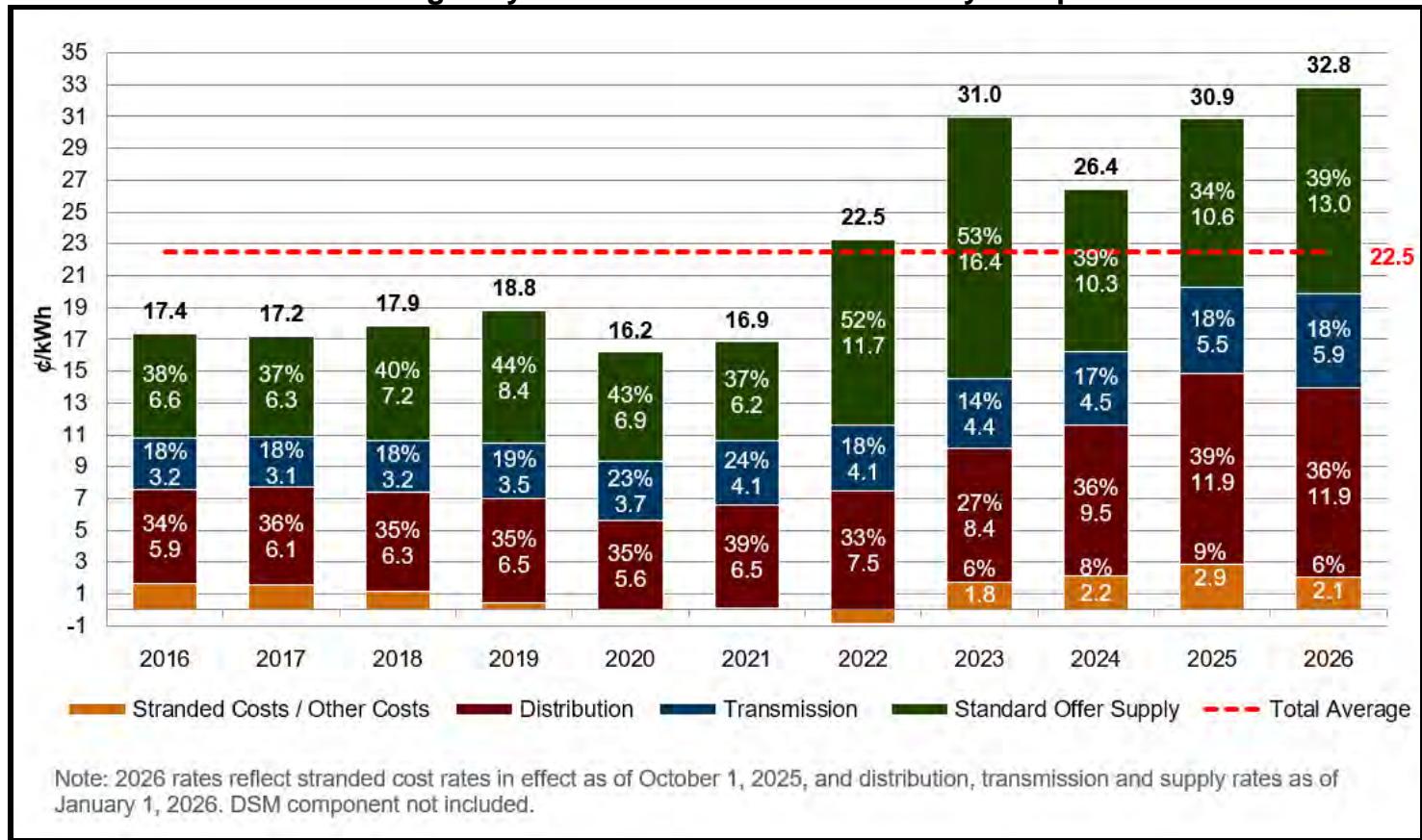
1. Central Maine Power, Versant Power - Bangor Hydro District and Versant Power - Maine Public District information based on residential rates in effect as of 1/2026. Consumer-owned utilities' information based on 2024 annual reports, page 50 (filed in 2025). Rate components not readily available for some consumer-owned utilities.

Charts 2, 3, and 4 provide a year-by-year price comparison by component for CMP and Versant Power residential customers. Distribution rates have been trending upward in recent years. The percentage figures are the proportion of the component as compared to the total price.

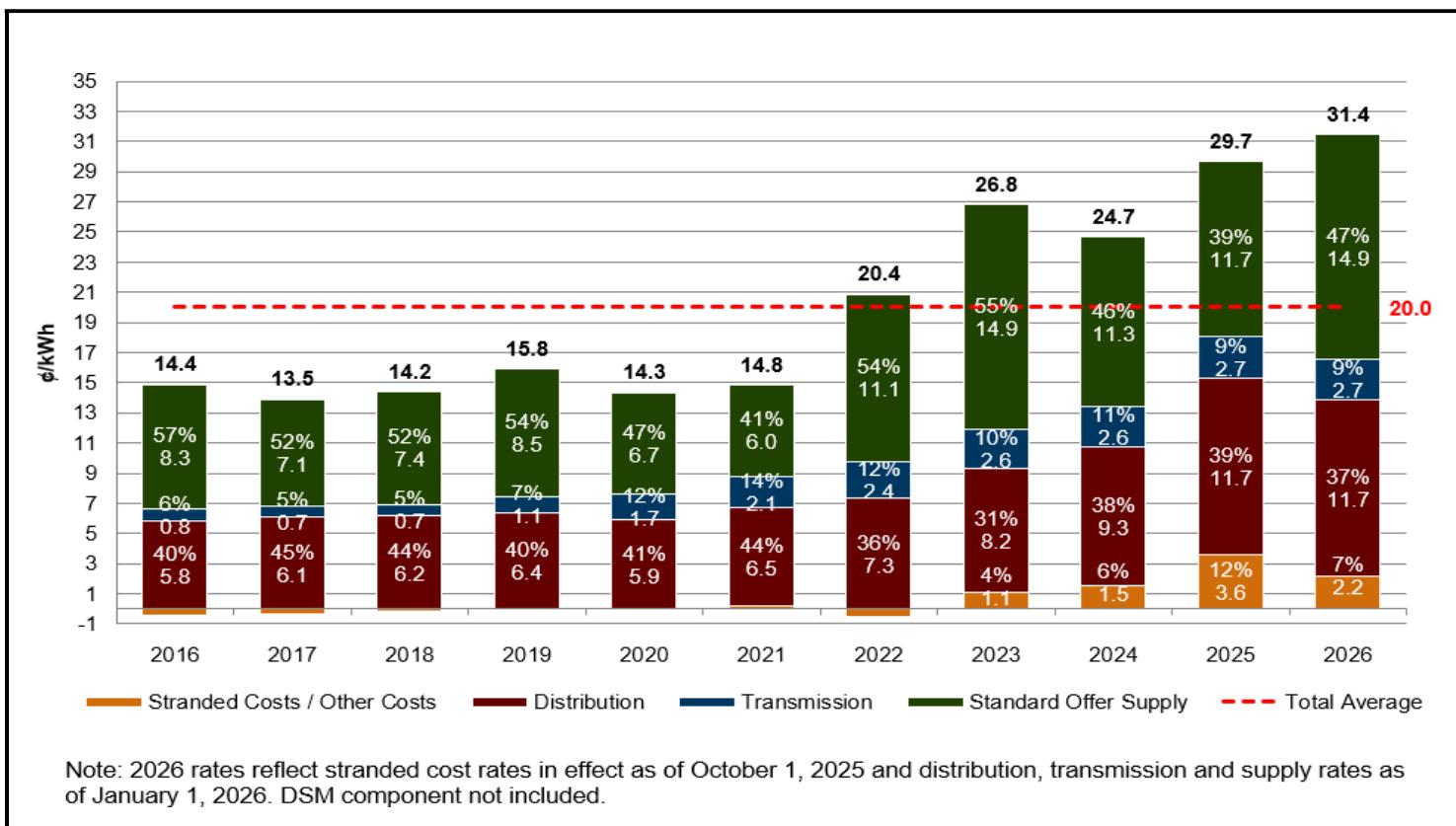
### Chart 2 – CMP Historical Prices by Component



### Chart 3 – Versant Power Bangor Hydro District Historical Prices by Component



### Chart 4 – Versant Power Maine Public District Historical Prices by Component



## MAJOR CASES, ISSUES AND PROCEEDINGS

### **Case No. 2025-00276 – Central Maine Power Company Request for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity: Greater Portland Transmission Upgrades**

On September 19, 2025, Central Maine Power Company (CMP) filed a petition seeking a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the construction of the Greater Portland Transmission Upgrades. The proposed project is planned in two phases: Phase 1 addresses time-sensitive reliability needs in the North Portland area, while Phase 2 will address needs in the South Portland area, incorporating stakeholder input and integrated grid planning directives, including guidance from Case No. 2025-00322, which identifies priorities for grid plans.

CMP states that the upgrades are necessary to resolve anticipated reliability criteria violations, ensure continued service to the Greater Portland load center, and address infrastructure needs driven by forecasted load growth and asset condition.

As of year-end 2025, the Commission's review of the petition is ongoing, with staff and stakeholders evaluating project scope, reliability benefits, and potential impacts before a final determination on the CPCN.

### **Case No. 2025-00218 – Central Maine Power Company Request for Approval of a Rate Change**

In 2025, Central Maine Power Company (CMP) filed a request seeking approval of a distribution rate change to support a series of proposed system investments. The case drew extraordinary statewide attention, generating a high volume of written public comments and significant turnout at public hearings. Dozens of Maine residents testified in person, raising concerns about affordability, customer service, and CMP's recent performance. Two parties filed motions to dismiss CMP's request.

The Commission deliberated the motions to dismiss and directed its Staff to draft an order, dismissing the rate filing. At deliberation, the Commission expressed concerns about the pace of CMP's proposed investments, the absence of a long-term integrated grid plan, the potential impact of the proposal on ratepayers, and whether the proposal could meet the statutory standard for establishing just and reasonable rates.

At deliberation, the Commission further emphasized that a dismissal did not indicate that CMP's proposed system investments weren't necessary. Instead, the Commission noted the filing lacked the comprehensive planning and evidentiary support required for a full regulatory evaluation. Prior to the final order being issued by the Commission, CMP withdrew its case and the Commission closed the docket.

In closing the docket, the Commission announced that it will open a separate proceeding to provide guidance regarding multi-year rate plans (see Case No. 2025-00354 below) and performance standards applicable in any future distribution rate case. This informal proceeding is intended to provide clearer expectations for utilities regarding rate-case structure, required planning, and performance accountability.

### **Case No. 2025-00354 – Inquiry into Multi-Year Rate Plans**

On December 5, 2025, Commission initiated an inquiry in Docket No. 2025-00354 to develop guidance on multi-year rate plans for investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities. This inquiry follows prior Commission proceedings on performance-based regulation and recent utility rate case filings.

The purpose of the inquiry is to establish the Commission's preferred approach to multi-year rate

plans, including expectations for performance metrics. The process includes development of a straw proposal by Commission staff, stakeholder workshops, oral and written comments, staff recommendations, and Commission deliberation, culminating in the issuance of formal guidance.

### **Case No. 2025-00164 – Investigation of Operations and Management Practices of Versant Power Company**

In 2025, the Commission opened a formal investigation pursuant to 35-A MRS §1303(2) into the operations and management practices of Versant Power Company. The inquiry was initiated to examine deficiencies identified in prior Commission proceedings and documented in a recent audit report, with a focus on determining what remedies or corrective actions the Commission should approve or require to address these issues.

The investigation has involved a detailed review of Versant's operational procedures, reliability metrics, customer service practices, and management controls. The Commission has requested data, conducted technical conferences, and sought stakeholder input on potential corrective measures. Key areas of focus include improving reliability performance, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards, and strengthening internal management and reporting practices.

As of year-end 2025, the investigation remains active, with staff continuing to analyze the information collected and evaluate proposed remedies. The Commission anticipates further proceedings in 2026 to determine appropriate corrective actions and implementation timelines.

### **Case No. 2025-00107 – Inquiry into Performance-Based Regulation**

On April 30, 2025, the Commission opened this Notice of Inquiry pursuant to 35-A MRS §1303(1) to support the Commission's examination and development of performance-based regulatory (PBR) tools for Maine's investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities. The inquiry was initiated to explore whether PBR could serve as a more effective complement or alternative to traditional cost-of-service regulation, with the goal of improving reliability, customer service, affordability, and alignment with state energy policy.

To assist in this effort, the Commission retained Christensen Associates Energy Consulting, which prepared a draft Performance-Based Regulation Report presenting findings and recommendations on how PBR structures could be applied in Maine. The report reviewed PBR models used in other jurisdictions, evaluated utility performance data, and examined potential regulatory tools including multi-year rate plans, indexed revenue formulas, and performance incentive mechanisms tied to measurable outcomes.

The purpose of the inquiry was to collect stakeholder input on the consultant's draft report—particularly the proposed goals for performance-based regulation and which specific PBR structures may be appropriate for Maine's electric utilities. Throughout 2025, the Commission gathered extensive comments and evaluated both stakeholder perspectives and expert recommendations.

### **Case No. 2024-00191 – Inquiry Regarding Improving Resiliency and Addressing Escalating Storm Costs**

The Commission opened this inquiry pursuant to 35-A MRS §1303(1) to identify near-term measures to improve electric system resiliency and address escalating storm restoration costs. Maine's increasing storm frequency and severity have raised concerns about reliability and expenses, while utilities continue developing their 10-year integrated grid plans to enhance system reliability, support clean energy goals, and meet climate policy requirements.

The inquiry solicited input from utilities and stakeholders on actions that could mitigate storm impacts in the near term and proactively address rising costs. The case remains open, with staff reviewing submissions and developing recommendations for actionable resiliency measures.

### **Case No. 2024-00137 – Investigation into Stranded Cost Rate Design**

The Commission continued its evaluation of stranded cost rate design for Maine's investor-owned utilities, building on earlier proceedings. The investigation examined alternative allocation and rate design scenarios for stranded costs, and whether alternatives could improve fairness, stability, and long-term alignment with cost-causation principles.

In 2025, the Legislature enacted two bills (L.D. 1792 and L.D. 1777) that significantly affected stranded cost rate design. In this docket, the Commission implemented the stranded cost rate design ordered in L.D. 1792, which was a significant change from previous rate design and allocation methodologies. Finally, the Commission will conclude this proceeding by setting forth a schedule for stranded cost reconciliations on a calendar year basis as directed by L.D. 1777. The Commission expects to issue a final order in early 2026.

### **Case No. 2024-00099 and 2025-00361 – Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program Draft RFP**

On October 3, 2025, the Commission issued a draft Request for Proposals to obtain input from potential bidders and other stakeholders on the structure and requirements for a future procurement of at least 1,200 MW of renewable generation and associated transmission in northern Maine. The draft RFP was intended to gather information to inform the Commission's final RFP, which was issued on December 19, 2025 in Docket 2025-00361. Proposals in response to the RFP are due on February 27, 2026 and the Commission anticipates making an award by early summer 2026.

The Commission also noted that several New England jurisdictions—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont—had expressed interest in coordinating with Maine on this procurement. The schedule is designed to allow selected projects to submit interconnection requests to ISO-NE during the request window opening in October 2026.

The procurement is aligned with ISO-NE's Longer-Term Transmission Planning (LTTP) solicitation; the selected northern Maine transmission project will be required to interconnect with LTTP facilities, with the southern terminus of the northern Maine project matching the northern terminus of the LTTP upgrades.

### **Beneficial Electrification**

In 2025, the Maine Public Utilities Commission completed its review of the Efficiency Maine Trust's Triennial Plan VI (2026–2028) in Docket No. 2024-00310, including evaluation of the Trust's new beneficial electrification program. As part of that review, the Commission assessed the cost-effectiveness of the Trust's proposed new reliable reduction and rate-reduction screen, examining how the framework measures long-term impacts on customer bills and system costs.

This review fulfilled the Commission's statutory oversight responsibilities and ensured that the Trust's efficiency and electrification initiatives are evaluated using updated tools that reflect consumer cost impacts while supporting Maine's energy and climate objectives.

### **Emergency Response Plans**

Pursuant to Title 35-A, §3144, the Commission requires each investor-owned transmission and distribution utility to maintain an emergency response plan addressing preparation, recovery,

and restoration following emergencies. These plans are required to be filed in even-numbered years. The utilities filed updated emergency response plans in 2024, and no additional filings are required until 2026.

## **Direct Sales**

Beginning in 2022 and every three years thereafter, the Commission must report pursuant to section 120, subsection 7, information regarding direct sales of electricity by an entity that generates electricity to commercial or industrial consumers located on the generating entity's property or an abutting property. It may also be on a commercial or industrial site that was served by the generating entity, or its predecessor, without using the transmission and distribution plant of a public utility prior to December 31, 2018.

The Commission has no information regarding the direct sale of electricity occurring prior to 2023 when the Commission issued an advisory ruling in Docket No. 2023-00207 determining that a specific contemplated transaction would not qualify for the exemption provided under 35-A section 2102(5). A similar advisory ruling request was made in Docket No. 2024-00366. On April 1, 2025 the Commission issued an advisory ruling determining that, based on the facts presented, the contemplated transaction and facilities would not be subject to regulation as a transmission and distribution utility or as a CEP.

## **REGIONAL ISSUES**

Maine electric customers indirectly participate in the regional power market in order to receive access to the bulk power system. ISO New England (ISO-NE) operates the wholesale power markets and manages the regional transmission system, including transmission lines for Maine-based customers and generators. The New England Power Pool (NEPOOL) are the market participants whose tariff governs the markets and access to the transmission system. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the federal agency that regulates both NEPOOL and ISO-NE.

Summarized below are the major regional matters that the Commission was involved in during 2025. The overwhelming focus of the region is transitioning to the grid of the future (2050), consistent with ISO-NE's 2025 Annual Work Plan priorities.

## **THE FUTURE GRID**

The electrification of the heating and the transportation sectors combined with the rapid commercialization of renewable generation are spurring a national transformation of the electric power industry. The Commission monitors regional implementation of major reforms through tariff changes at NEPOOL and operational system changes at ISO-NE, including several "anchor" initiatives prioritized in ISO-NE's 2025 work plan.

In New England, Maine's Governor joined other New England governors in 2020 calling for a revised partnership with ISO-New England to help advance State policies, available at:

<https://nescoe.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Electricity%20System%20Reform%20GovStatement%2014Oct2020.pdf>.

The Governors' statement was followed by a more detailed Vision Statement by NESCOE, calling for significant changes in three core segments of New England's energy system: Wholesale Electricity Market Design, Transmission System Planning, and ISO-NE Governance. The full Vision Statement is available here: <https://nescoe.com/resource-center/vision-stmt-oct2020/#:~:text=October%202020%20E2%80%93%20The%20New%20England,system%3A%20Wholesale%20Electricity%20Market%20Design>.

Since 2023, the Commission, along with other states, ISO-NE, and the NEPOOL stakeholders have embarked on large and complex reforms to the regional rules and ISO-NE planning tools necessary

to implement the objectives of the Vision Statement. Major market rule reforms, several years in the making, to better accommodate changing energy needs are well underway. These rule reforms are highly consultative and typically include at least three stakeholder meetings per month.

There are four major initiatives underway.

The first are capacity auction reforms which seek to improve power system cost-efficiency and reliability. The reform is described here: (<https://www.iso-ne.com/committees/key-projects/capacity-auction-reforms-key-project>).

A second major initiative is improving day-ahead reliability through market enhancements that better value flexibility. In 2025, ISO-NE implemented the Day-Ahead Ancillary Services Initiative (DASI), introducing ancillary services and constraints in the Day-Ahead Market to support a secure next-day operating plan with an evolving resource mix. The Commission continues to closely monitor the performance of this new market and ISO-NE is expected to produce a comprehensive report in mid-2026. The project is described here: (<https://www.iso-ne.com/participate/support/participant-readiness-outlook/day-ahead-ancillary-services-initiative>).

The third major initiative is long-term transmission planning to address future changes to the grid. In 2025, this work included ISO-NE's first Long-Term Transmission Planning (LTTP) solicitation—explicitly focused on improving transfers between northern Maine and southern New England and enabling additional northern Maine generation deliverability. This is described in more detail below.

The fourth major initiative is strengthening regional energy security and operational planning tools to address extreme-weather risks as New England transitions to a more weather-dependent and fuel-constrained resource mix. In 2025, the earlier EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute) work was advanced into the Regional Energy Shortfall Threshold (REST) effort, as described below.

The Commission is extensively involved in each of these efforts.

### **Regional Energy Security and REST**

As noted in last year's report, ISO-NE worked with the EPRI in 2022 and 2023 to conduct a probabilistic energy-security study for the New England region under extreme weather events and developed the Probabilistic Energy Adequacy Tool (PEAT) for ISO-NE's use in assessing operational energy-security risks. In 2024 and 2025, ISO-NE worked with regional stakeholders to establish a Regional Energy Shortfall Threshold (REST) that defines an acceptable level of energy shortfall risk, and to use annual PEAT assessments against REST to inform whether regional solutions may be needed over time. More information on REST is available here: (<https://www.iso-ne.com/committees/key-projects/operational-impacts-of-extreme-weather-events>).

### **Long-Term Transmission Planning (LTTP)**

One outcome of NESCOE's Vision Statement was the development of a long-term transmission study to help the states and region better understand what changes will be needed to the transmission system to accommodate the expected influx of renewable energy and demand growth. Following completion of the first study, known as the 2050 Transmission Study, the states worked with ISO-NE to develop a process and cost-sharing mechanism to address long-term transmission needs.

In December 2024, NESCOE made its first request to ISO-New England to issue a request for proposals (RFP) under ISO-NE's LTTP process. ISO-NE issued that 2025 LTTP RFP on March 31, 2025—an important milestone and a significant accomplishment for Maine, because the solicitation is designed around upgrading the transmission system in Maine and supporting interconnection of at least 1,200 MW of new northern Maine renewable generation.

By late 2025, ISO-NE reported receiving six proposals in response to the LTTP RFP, and publicly

summarized that all proposals claim to meet the RFP targets for increased transfers and to support interconnection of 1,200 MW of new generation in northern Maine. More information on LTTP is available here: (<https://www.iso-ne.com/system-planning/transmission-planning/longer-term-transmission-studies>).

### **LTTP Intersection with the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program**

This LTTP work also directly intersects with the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program procurement, as described above in Major Cases, Issues, and Proceedings. In Docket No. 2025-00361, the Commission issued a new RFP on December 19, 2025, seeking cost-effective proposals that pair northern Maine generation with transmission needed to connect at least 1,200 MW of resources to ISO-NE—explicitly designed to interconnect “at the northern terminus” of the facilities constructed as a result of ISO-NE’s LTTP solicitation.

### **Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)**

In 2023, a substantive change to the RPS was made when the legislature passed An Act to Amend the Portfolio Requirements for Class II Resources and Require Money Collected from Alternative Compliance Payments to Be Used for Financial Assistance to address historically high market prices for Class II renewable energy credits (RECs). The Act added an Alternative Compliance Mechanism (ACM) for Class II REC compliance and set a cap of \$10 on the alternative compliance payment (ACP) rate. Subsequently, the Commission conducted a rulemaking proceeding (Docket No. 2023-00225) which adopted a change to Chapter 311 to set the Class II ACP rate at \$5 per REC. In 2025, \$26,950 was received under Class I, \$229,100 was received under Class IA, and \$1,782,280 was received under Class II, all of which was distributed to Maine State Housing Authority for the Low-Income Assistance Program. To support thermal technologies, \$2,184,400 was distributed to Efficiency Maine Trust, primarily for high-efficiency heat pumps.

### **In-State Generation Resources**

As of May 6, 2025, there are approximately 5,948 MW of nameplate generating capacity located in Maine (plus 351 MW in NMISA). These plants operate in response to the ISO-NE’s dispatch instructions, which may require them to operate at full output or not at all. A complete list of generating plants in Maine is available at:

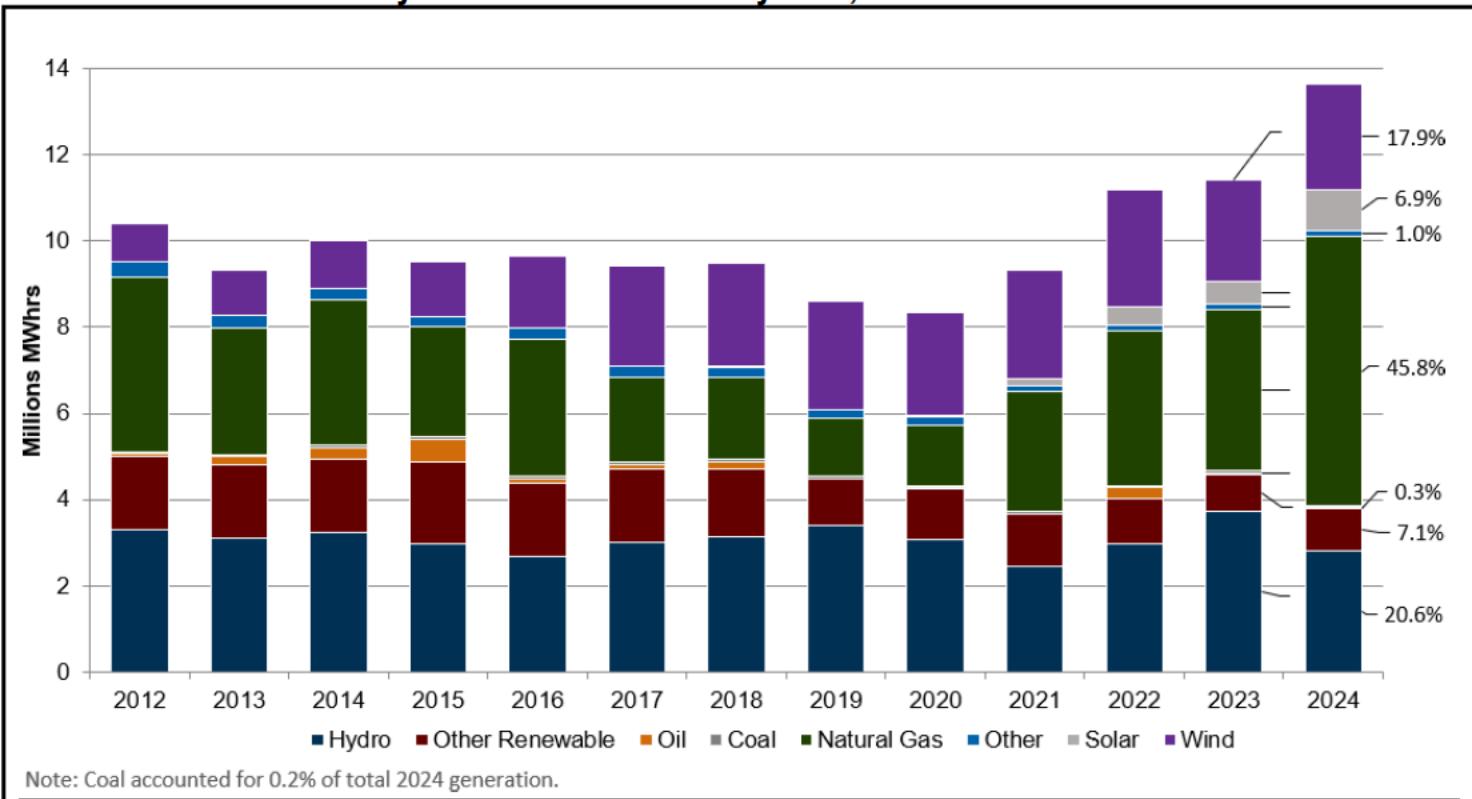
ISO-NE 2025 CELT Report: <https://www.iso-ne.com/system-planning/system-plans-studies/celt>

NMISA 18 Month Load and Capacity Assessment WCP 2025-2026:

<https://www.nmisa.com/documents-2/>

The fuel sources of electricity produced in Maine in 2024 (the most recent EIA data available) are shown in Chart 5 below. About 54% of electricity produced in Maine in 2024 came from renewable resources.

Chart 5 – Electricity Generation in Maine by Fuel, 2012 – 2024



Source: EIA Generation Data Form EIA-923

<https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/state/>

Excludes generation in the “Combined Heat and Power, Industrial Power” category.

### Rate Adjustment Mechanisms

The Commission is authorized by statute to adopt rate adjustment mechanisms, such as multi-year rate plans and the decoupling of utility profits from sales through revenue reconciliation. Significant developments must be included in the annual report.

As part of CMP's rate case, the Stipulating Parties agreed to the continuation of CMP's distribution revenue decoupling mechanism (RDM), subject to certain changes to how the RDM would be applied. The purpose of an RDM is to reduce the Company's dependence on its actual kilowatt-hour sales and kW customer demand to collect its revenues. This reduces the exposure of the Company to risks associated with fluctuating electricity consumption and removes any potential disincentives for the Company to support energy efficiency efforts. The risks and benefits of the RDM flow to all ratepayers.

In a Stipulation approved on June 11, 2025, in CMP's Compliance Filing case (Docket Number 2025-00018), the rate change effective July 1, 2025, included the January to December 2024 RDM Adjustment increases of \$ 6,301,929 for residential customers and \$ 2,174,289 for commercial and industrial customers taking service at distribution voltage levels.

As part of Versant's last Distribution Rate Case, the Commission approved the establishment of an RDM. In a Stipulation approved June 11, 2025 (Docket Number 2025-00114), for calendar year 2024, the RDM adjustment results in an increase for customers of \$1,031,177, inclusive of carrying costs through the recovery period.

## 5. NATURAL GAS

### THE NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY IN MAINE

Natural gas service in Maine consists of two components: delivery and supply. Local delivery service is provided by Maine's Local Distribution Companies (LDCs) at rates and terms regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Interstate pipeline companies transport natural gas from supply-producing regions, including Canada and the Marcellus Shale, under rates and terms regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Natural gas supply is provided either by an LDC or by non-utility suppliers, also known as marketers. Business customers have the option to purchase their gas supply from a non-LDC supplier or marketer. Prices for LDC-provided supply are set through Commission-approved cost-of-gas rates, which reflect the actual cost incurred for natural gas, as well as upstream transportation and storage arrangements. Supply prices from non-utility suppliers and marketers are not regulated by the Commission.

In recent years, wholesale natural gas prices in New England have been volatile, particularly during cold winter periods, and have often deviated significantly from national trends. In 2024, prices remained relatively stable, though they were higher than several years prior. In 2025, prices have shown an upward trend.

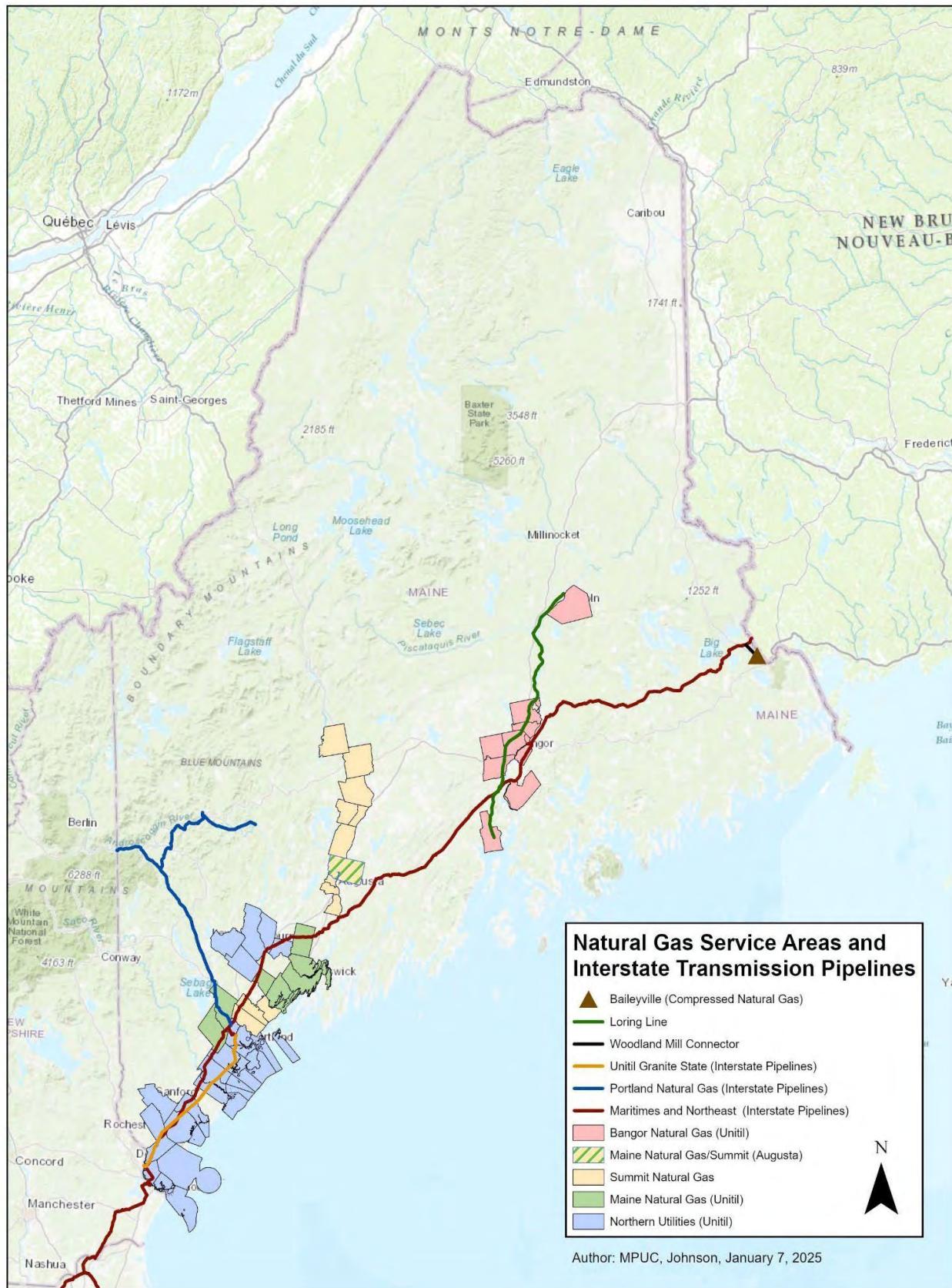
The Commission also regulates sales, acquisitions, and mergers of corporations that own LDCs operating in Maine. In addition, it oversees the safety of LDC operations and facilities, as well as certain propane facilities (see Section 9). In areas where federal agencies have jurisdiction over issues affecting Maine consumers, the Commission actively monitors federal proceedings and participates as appropriate.

Currently, four natural gas LDCs are authorized to provide service in Maine:

- Northern Utilities, Inc. (d/b/a Unitil): Serves customers in the south-central Maine area, primarily in Greater Portland and South Portland/Westbrook, Greater Lewiston/Auburn, Biddeford/Saco, and Kittery.
- Maine Natural Gas Corporation: Serves customers in the Windham, Gorham, Brunswick, Freeport, Bath, Topsham, and Augusta areas. Maine Natural Gas is wholly owned by Unitil.
- Bangor Natural Gas Company (d/b/a Unitil): Serves customers in the Greater Bangor area. Bangor Natural Gas is wholly owned by Unitil.
- Summit Natural Gas of Maine: Serves customers in the Kennebec Valley area, as well as the municipalities of Yarmouth, Cumberland, and Falmouth.

There are three FERC-jurisdictional interstate pipelines with facilities located in Maine: the Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline, the Portland Natural Gas Transmission System (PNGTS), and Granite State Gas Transmission, an affiliate of Northern Utilities. **Figure 2** provides a map of the LDC service areas and interstate pipelines located in Maine.

## Figure 2-Natural Gas Pipelines and LDC Service Areas



## **SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Docket 2025-00145 — Inquiry Regarding the Future of Natural Gas**

In May 2025, the Commission issued a Notice of Inquiry under 35-A M.R.S. § 1303(1) to examine how Maine's decarbonization goals affect natural gas utilities and their customers. The inquiry sought stakeholder input on utility planning, operations, rates, workforce, customer affordability, equity, and potential business model changes in light of climate targets. Twelve other states and D.C. have initiated similar proceedings. The Commission initially requested comments by June 10, 2025, extending the deadline to June 17. The docket remains open, with comments received from utilities, industry groups, and government agencies; next steps may include workshops or further stakeholder engagement.

### **Docket 2025-00143 — Order Approving Stipulation and Merger of Maine Natural Gas Corporation into Unitil Corporation**

In September 2025, the Commission approved the merger of Maine Natural Gas Corporation into Unitil Corporation under the terms of a stipulation filed on September 5, 2025, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 1303(2)(A) and Commission Rule Ch. 110(D)(7). The stipulating parties agreed to commitments addressing the effects of the reorganization on rates, including that transaction costs and acquisition premiums will not be recovered from customers, and ratepayers will be held harmless from tax-related impacts of the transaction. The stipulation also included: approval of affiliate agreements, greenhouse gas and pipeline safety commitments, cost allocations, service quality standards, regulatory conditions, low-income program protections, and "ring-fencing" measures to protect utility assets. The Commission found the stipulation in the public interest and approved the merger.

### **Alternative Rate-Making Mechanisms**

The Commission is authorized to adopt alternative rate-making mechanisms to promote efficiency, financial incentives, rate stability, and equitable cost recovery. These mechanisms can include multi-year rate plans, revenue or cost reconciliations, indexed adjustments, and streamlined regulatory approaches. In 2025, no new alternative rate-making mechanisms or multi-year plans were adopted or approved for Maine's natural gas utilities, and no actions under this authority were taken during the year.

### **Low-Income Assistance Programs for Gas Utilities**

Under 35-A M.R.S. § 4706-B, the Commission reports on low-income assistance programs offered by local distribution companies. In 2025, Northern Utilities (d/b/a Unitil) provided a 30% discount on delivery and gas supply rates to qualifying low-income residential customers who are eligible for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Bangor Gas transitioned to the same 30% discount in October 2025, and Maine Natural Gas has filed a pending request to also transition to a 30% discount effective January 1, 2026. This reflects the transition of Bangor Gas to Unitil's low-income discount program following its acquisition and system integration. The discount applies for 12 consecutive months once customers enroll through their LIHEAP eligibility.

# 6. WATER

## THE WATER INDUSTRY IN MAINE

The Commission regulates 152 water utilities in Maine, which include both investor and consumer-owned utilities. Consumer-owned water utilities are water departments, which are a division or department of a city or town, or districts, which are municipal or quasi-municipal entities governed by municipal officials or elected or appointed boards of trustees. Water utilities, whether investor-owned or consumer-owned, are generally created by private and special laws (charters) enacted by the Legislature. These charters establish corporate (territorial) limits, grant powers, define authority and responsibilities and specify other provisions and criteria which govern the administration and operation of the water utility.

The Commission is charged with oversight of the rates and services of water utilities. In 2025, the Commission docketed 72 new water cases, which included rate cases, issue of securities, revisions of non-rate-related terms and conditions, infrastructure surcharge filings, and other requests.

The Department of Health and Human Services' Drinking Water Program regulates water quality through the administration of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The Department of Environmental Protection also oversees some water utility issues such as regulations protecting water sources.

## SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

### Commission-initiated Legislation

#### **LD 1686 – Consumer-Owned Water Utilities**

LD 1686, enacted as Public Law 2025, chapter 325, clarifies and updates regulatory requirements for consumer-owned water utilities. The new law confirms that these utilities do not need PUC approval to issue stocks, bonds, or notes, even if their charters, which are established under private or special law, include language requiring such authorization. It also corrects the annual rate adjustment process, allowing utilities to increase rates by up to 1.5% of current rates each year, instead of 1.5% of current total revenue. These changes provide greater clarity, streamline regulatory oversight, and ensure consistency across statutes and utility charters.

#### **LD 251 – Protection of Customer Information**

LD 251, enacted as Public Law 2025, Chapter 99, protects the confidentiality of customer information held by public utilities, the Office of the Public Advocate, or the Commission. Information designated as confidential by Commission rules is not a public record under the Freedom of Access Act. The law also extends these protections to customers of sewer districts, whether part of a water district or a separate district department.

#### **Docket 2024-00378 — Request for Approval of Unified Rate Schedules (Maine Water Company)**

At the end of 2024, the Commission opened a case (Docket No. 2024-00378) in which The Maine Water Company requested approval to adopt unified rate schedules for all ten of its Maine operating divisions under 35-A M.R.S. § 307. Currently, each division has its own Commission-approved rate schedules, even though they operate under a common set of terms and conditions.

The company proposed revenue-neutral, consolidated rates company-wide to address administrative inefficiencies associated with separate divisional regulations and to better manage increasing

regulatory and operational costs. The unified rate proposal is also intended to support consistent ratemaking practices and enable a company-wide low-income assistance program. Stakeholder discussions, including questions from the Office of the Public Advocate about earnings impacts, cost allocation, and low-income assistance, occurred during the technical conference phase in 2025. This case was resolved by a stipulation entered into by the Office of the Public Advocate and The Maine Water Company which was approved by the Commission on January 6, 2026.

### **Docket 2024-00300 — Loring Development Authority Water Rates**

In November 2024, the Commission opened a ten-person complaint regarding Loring Development Authority's water rate increases under 35-A M.R.S. § 1302. In April 2025, the Commission held a public witness hearing to allow community members to provide testimony on the impacts. The Commission ordered temporary reduced rates while the investigation remains open. The case continues as the Commission evaluates whether the Authority's rates are just and reasonable.

## **INDUSTRY TRENDS**

### **Aging Water Infrastructure and Costs**

Water utilities in Maine and nationwide continue to face the urgent need to replace aging infrastructure that is at or near the end of its useful life. Much of the existing system—including pipes, pumping stations, and treatment facilities—was installed during periods of rapid growth from the late 1800s through the mid-20th century, and many components are now antiquated. The Maine Drinking Water Program estimates that roughly \$1.0 billion will be needed over the next 20 years to maintain safe, reliable service, with additional investments required to meet evolving federal water quality standards.

Replacing water infrastructure is costly and can create significant financial challenges for utilities and their customers. Small, consumer-owned systems, often managed by volunteer boards, may face particular strain, as infrastructure upgrades can result in substantial rate increases. To help utilities address these challenges, Commission staff provide guidance on capital planning, funding options, and regulatory processes, while engaging in outreach, training, and coordination with industry stakeholders to support efficient operations and ensure rates remain just and reasonable.

### **Rate Adjustment Mechanism for Water Utilities**

Under 35-A M.R.S. § 6102-A, the Commission may authorize rate-adjustment mechanisms to decouple water utility revenues from sales changes due to fluctuations in customer numbers or consumption. In 2025, no such rate-adjustment mechanisms were requested or granted by regulated water utilities. Water utilities instead managed rate changes through standard filings, and the Commission continues to provide guidance and oversight to support utilities—particularly smaller, consumer-owned systems—in maintaining just and reasonable rates while addressing operational and infrastructure costs.

## 7. WATERBORNE TRANSPORTATION

### Waterborne Transportation in Casco Bay

Pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. §§ 5101-5111, and Chapters 510, 520, and 560 of the Commission's rules, the Commission regulates the provision of ferry, charter, water taxi, and unscheduled freight services between Peaks Island, Great Diamond Island, Little Diamond Island, Long Island, Chebeague Island, Cliff Island, and the mainland of Cumberland County (the "Regulated Islands").

No person, other than Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD), which was created by Private and Special Law 1981, c. 22, may provide ferry service within this regulated territory of Casco Bay without obtaining a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the Commission. Further, no person may provide charter, water taxi, or unscheduled freight service within this regulated territory without obtaining authorization from the Commission.

### SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Case No. 2025-0160 Casco Bay Island District Rate Increase**

In May 2025, the Casco Bay Island Transit District filed a proposed rate increase. Notices and opportunities for comment were provided to ratepayers, and two petitions signed by 50 or more ratepayers requesting a formal investigation were received. The Commission concluded that the rate changes, which became effective on June 21, 2025, resulted from a public process held in accordance with Commission rules (Chapter 560) and declined to open a formal investigation on December 15, 2025. The Commission did, however, direct the district to collect information on year-round residents experiencing financial hardship due to the rate changes and report back by May 15, 2026.

## 8. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Commission regulates Provider of Last Resort (POLR) service offered by incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs), which provides basic telephone service at a flat rate within a defined calling area. POLR service includes access to emergency services, operator services, long-distance service, directory assistance, and a toll limitation option for low-income customers.

The Commission also enforces certain provisions of federal telecommunications law related to wholesale services and interactions between incumbent and competitive providers. The Commission certifies competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs) authorized to operate in Maine but does not regulate their retail services, and it does not regulate wireless, VoIP, internet, or broadband services.

Ongoing changes in the telecommunications industry, including increased competition, have led to declining ILEC access lines and POLR subscriptions. Fewer than 10 percent of ILEC customers now receive POLR service, and customers who add advanced services are no longer considered POLR customers. Consumers may obtain long-distance service from a variety of providers, including cable, wireless, and VoIP providers. By law, interconnected VoIP providers (I-VoIPs) with direct access to numbering resources from the 207 Area Code must register with the Commission. There are now 16 I-VoIPs in Maine, and this class of telecommunications providers is expected to continue to grow.

The Commission also manages telecommunications numbering resources, including oversight of the 207 area code. Through ongoing monitoring and conservation efforts, the projected life of Maine's single area code has been extended to approximately 2050.

### SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Case No. 2025-00177 — Investigation into Pole Attachment Dispute between Spectrum Northeast LLC (Charter) and. Central Maine Power Company**

In May 2025, Spectrum Northeast LLC filed a pole-attachment dispute against CMP challenging rate increases for 2023 and 2024. The Commission's Rapid Response Process team recommended a formal investigation, and in July 2025 the Commission agreed, finding the dispute required detailed fact-finding and legal analysis beyond the expedited process. All prior RRP complaints were dismissed without prejudice, and filings from the RRP were incorporated into the new docket. A procedural schedule was adopted in September 2025, with data requests, testimony, and technical conferences ongoing, and proceedings continuing into early 2026.

#### **207 Area Code Exhaustion**

As of October 31, 2025, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) projects that Maine's 207 area code will last until approximately 2050. This represents a significant extension from NANPA's prior projection issued in April 2025, which forecasted an exhaust date in early 2045. Under the latest analysis, Maine now ranks among the states with the longest remaining area code lifespan nationwide. By comparison, NANPA estimates that many area codes nationally will reach exhaust between 2052 and 2060.

The Commission attributes the continued longevity of the 207 area code to effective number management practices and ongoing efforts to consolidate rate centers, which reduce the rate at which new telephone numbers must be assigned. Consolidated Communications, which is playing a key role in rate center consolidation efforts, estimates that this number conservation strategy could be implemented as early as March 2026.

The Commission continues to work closely with industry partners to preserve a single statewide area code for as long as possible, potentially aligning the lifespan of the 207 area code with the overall longevity of the national numbering system. When NANPA first began projecting exhaust dates, the 207 area code was expected to be depleted as early as 2024. The latest analysis reflects the success of the Commission's ongoing numbering conservation initiatives.

### **Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF)**

The Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF) supports the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN), which provides statewide connectivity, digital resources, and related services to Maine's schools and libraries. The program is funded through assessments on telecommunications providers, as authorized by statute.

On June 11, 2025, the Commission approved the fiscal year 2025–2026 MSLN budget, authorizing a total disbursement of \$6,060,054 from the MTEAF. On August 4, 2025, the Maine Department of Education and Maine State Library (MDOE/MSL) filed a request for a supplemental disbursement. The request was driven in part by the loss of federal funding resulting from recent presidential executive orders that prohibit the use of federal funds for database subscriptions. One major program affected is the EBSCO Discovery Service, described by MDOE/MSL as the backbone of Maine's digital library, enabling patrons to search multiple databases through a single platform.

MDOE/MSL also reported approximately \$70,000 in unspent MTEAF funds from fiscal year 2024–2025 that had not yet been disbursed and requested authorization to apply those funds in fiscal year 2025–2026. On October 7, 2025, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 7104-B, the Commission approved a supplemental disbursement of \$52,291 from the MTEAF for the period July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, finding the request to offset the loss of federal funding to be reasonable.

### **Maine Universal Service Fund (MUSF) – 2025 Overview**

The Maine Universal Service Fund (MUSF) is administered by the Commission under 35-A M.R.S. §7104 and Chapter 288. The Fund supports universal telecommunications service statewide and ensures that basic voice services remain available at reasonable rates, particularly in higher-cost and rural areas.

### **POLR Support**

The MUSF distributes approximately \$7.4 million annually to eligible Provider of Last Resort (POLR) carriers. This support ensures that voice service is available across all areas of the state at reasonably comparable and affordable rates.

### **Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)**

The TRS program enables deaf, hard-of-hearing, late-deafened, and speech-impaired individuals to place and receive phone calls through a third-party intermediary. The TRS Advisory Council submits an annual budget to the Commission, not to exceed \$600,000, and funds are transferred quarterly to support program operations and statewide accessibility.

### **Communications Equipment Fund (CEF)**

The Commission transfers \$250,000 annually from the MUSF to the CEF, administered by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, to purchase, install, maintain, and provide training on specialized communications equipment for Mainers with hearing or speech disabilities. When federal or other funding sources are insufficient, the Bureau has historically received an additional \$100,000 annually from the MUSF.

### **Blind and Visually Impaired News Access Fund**

Established in 2019, this program provides access to news services for blind and visually impaired Mainers. The MUSF supports the program through an annual transfer of \$40,000 to the Maine State Library.

### **Public Interest Payphone (PIP) Program**

The Commission oversees 35 public interest payphone sites across the state. The annual cost of this program is roughly \$29,000, funded through the MUSF. A statutory update allows the Commission to collect up to \$50,000 annually for PIP support if needed.

### **Funding and Contributions**

All voice network service providers with Maine telephone numbers contribute to the MUSF and MTEAF on a quarterly basis, ensuring continued support for these critical programs.

### **Federal Lifeline Program – 2025 Update**

The federal Lifeline program provides a monthly benefit to help eligible low-income households reduce the cost of phone or Internet service. In 2025, the standard Lifeline benefit is up to \$9.25 per month, with an enhanced benefit of up to \$34.25 per month for households on federally recognized Tribal lands. To qualify, a household must have income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in a qualifying federal assistance program such as SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, or Federal Public Housing Assistance. Only one Lifeline benefit is available per household, which may be applied to either phone or Internet service. Eligible consumers must apply and recertify periodically to maintain their benefit.

### **Telephone Exemptions**

In accordance with statutory changes enacted by the 125th Maine Legislature, the Commission may grant exemptions from certain portions of Title 35-A to providers of provider of last resort (POLR) service.

During calendar year 2025, the Commission did not receive any requests for exemptions from POLR service providers. No exemptions under 35-A M.R.S. § 912 have been granted or acted upon in 2025. This continues the trend from previous years, in which the Commission also did not receive requests for telephone exemptions under this statute.

## 9. GAS SAFETY

### GAS SAFETY REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT IN MAINE

The Maine Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates the safety and reliability of natural gas and LPG service in Maine. As of December 31, 2024, Commission oversight covers approximately 1,462 miles of natural gas distribution mains, 83 miles of intrastate transmission pipelines (including a 5-mile private pipeline operated by Woodland Pulp LLC), and 43,408 customer services. In addition, the Commission enforces safety standards for roughly 524 LPG distribution facilities that provide service to multi-unit housing, commercial buildings, and other facilities where system failures could affect large numbers of people.

The Commission derives its authority from both state law and federal pipeline safety regulations, adopting federal standards through Chapters 420 and 421 of its rules. The Commission is a PHMSA-certified state agent, ensuring that intrastate transmission and distribution systems comply with federal and state safety regulations through inspections, compliance audits, and investigations of safety incidents.

In 2025, the gas safety staff conducted 226 inspection-person days: 139.5 days on natural gas facilities and 86.5 days on LPG operations. Inspections verify compliance with design, construction, operation, and maintenance requirements. Staff also enforce the Damage Prevention Program, ensuring compliance with Chapter 895 of the Commission's rules related to excavation and pipeline safety.

PHMSA conducts annual evaluations of all state-certified programs. In 2025, the Commission received a score of 100%, and PHMSA certified the adequacy of Maine's damage prevention program. Gas safety staff participate actively in the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives (NAPSR) and other PHMSA/NAPSR committees. All inspectors complete PHMSA training and qualification requirements, and one staff member serves as an associate instructor in PHMSA's welding inspection course.

Through these activities, the Commission ensures that Maine's gas and LPG systems are operated safely and reliably for customers across the state.

**Table 3 – Natural Gas and Propane Inspection Data**

	Inspection Person Days*				
Inspection Type – Natural Gas	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Operating Procedures & Records	50.5	25.5	35.5	36	43
Construction & Related Records	53	71	63	55	61.5
Integrity Management Programs	6.5	3	1	13.5	**
Operator Qualification Programs	13	10.5	4	12	10
Accident or Incident Investigations	N/A	1	0	N/A	N/A
Damage Prevention	5.5	1	4	3	5
Public Awareness Programs	12	2	4	2	9
Drug & Alcohol Testing Programs	6.5	0	0	12	0
Compliance Follow-Up	23.5	29	23	14	8
Operator Training	6	0	5	1	3
<b>Inspection Type - Propane</b>					
Procedures, Facilities & Records	75.5	85	46.5	60	57
Operator Qualification Programs	**	2.5**	6**	1**	8**
Accident or Incident Investigations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Integrity Management Programs	**	**	**	**	**
Damage Prevention	0.5	0	0	0	1.5
Compliance Follow-Up	3	5	30	20	14
Operator Training	10	6	9	4.5	6
# of Facilities Inspected (not Inspection Person Days)	88	129	167	121	124

\* An “inspection person day” is defined by PHMSA as all or part of a day spent by pipeline safety staff in on-site evaluation of an operator’s system to determine compliance with Federal or State pipeline safety regulations; or in on-site investigation of a pipeline incident; or in training of an operator. Data is as of 12/30/25.

\*\* Integrity Management and Operator Qualification inspections were also conducted in conjunction with inspections of the Operating and Maintenance Procedures and Records.

LPG inspections conducted in 2025 resulted in some required corrective actions to bring facilities, procedures, or record keeping into compliance. Most of these corrective actions were handled through informal proceedings, without notices of probable violations (NOPVs) or civil penalties. Two NOPV were issued to LPG operators for failure to follow procedures and included civil penalties of \$5,000 and \$20,000.

During 2025, inspections of natural gas operators also resulted in corrective enforcement, addressed through informal processes including warning letters and compliance reminders.

## 2025 Construction

The four natural gas local distribution companies in Maine added an estimated total of 26.93 miles of new distribution mains and 629 new services in 2025. This estimate is based on preliminary reports from the companies. Distribution companies will report final, verified 2025 totals to PHMSA via the Gas Distribution System Annual Report Information in March 2026.

## Leak Reporting

On June 9, Governor Mills approved L.D. 1473 – An Act to Require Gas Utilities to Assess for Natural Gas Leaks and to Require Reporting of Gas Leak Information. The Act became Public Law 2025, Chapter 217, as Maine Revised Statutes Title 35-A § 4713.

The Act allows the Maine Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules regarding provisions of the Law.

These provisions include leak reporting requirements that provide the Commission with information necessary to compile annual reports to the legislature.

## 10. DIG SAFE

### UNDERGROUND FACILITY DAMAGE PREVENTION AND ENFORCEMENT

The Damage Prevention section of the Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (CASD) is responsible for enforcing Maine's underground facilities damage prevention law, commonly known as the Dig Safe Law (23 M.R.S. § 3360-A). The law is intended to prevent damage to underground utility facilities—including gas, water, electric, and telecommunications lines—resulting from excavation activities.

Under the Dig Safe Law and the Commission's implementing rule (Chapter 895), any person or company planning to excavate near underground facilities must follow specified safety procedures and provide advance notice to facility owners. Most facility operators, including large utilities, are notified through the Dig Safe System. Excavators may submit notifications online at [www.digsafe.com](http://www.digsafe.com) or by calling 1-800-DIGSAFE or 811.

Excavators must also notify facility operators that are not members of the Dig Safe System, such as municipalities and small utilities. To assist with this requirement, the Commission maintains the OKTODIG program, a database of non-member facility operators. Excavators may access OKTODIG online at [www.oktodig.com](http://www.oktodig.com) or by calling 1-800-OKTODIG.

Once notified of a planned excavation, facility operators are required to locate and mark their underground facilities in accordance with the Dig Safe Law and Chapter 895, ensuring excavators are aware of facility locations prior to digging.

Violations of the Dig Safe Law and Chapter 895 must be reported to the Commission, which investigates each incident and determines appropriate enforcement action, if warranted. To promote compliance, the Commission conducts regular training programs and provides public education materials through its website and through social and traditional media outreach, with a particular focus on private property owners.

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) began evaluating state damage prevention programs to determine whether states adequately enforce their damage prevention laws and regulations. A finding of inadequate enforcement could result in PHMSA assuming enforcement authority and the loss of a portion of federal gas safety program funding.

As of 2025, Maine's damage prevention program received a perfect PHMSA evaluation score for seven consecutive years, reflecting the continued effectiveness of the Commission's enforcement and education efforts.

### INDUSTRY TRENDS

A review of Table 4 below shows that the overall number of damage incidents experienced in 2025 increased 7% from 2024, with most incidents involving cable television facilities. This figure also includes some miscellaneous incidents which is why the subcategories do not add to the total.

The Commission conducts an on-site investigation into each incident as soon as possible, in many cases on the same day, to determine the cause of the incident and to assess the risks to people and underground facilities. Based on this investigation, the Commission determines any appropriate response to the incident, such as training or the assessment of a financial penalty for the violator.

**Table 4 – Summary of Dig Safe Activity**

Metric	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reported Total Incidents	313	323	308	319	342
Reported Electric Incidents	58	75	52	60	57
Reported Gas Incidents	54	46	44	28	36
Reported Telecom Incidents	68	55	56	46	63
Reported Water Incidents	33	24	32	27	34
Reported Sewer Incidents	24	16	16	10	14
Reported CATV Incidents	45	70	67	117	118
Excavator Violations	81	75	61	58	45
Operator Violations	59	82	67	56	55
Penalties Assessed	\$188,500	\$245,000	\$200,500	\$207,000	\$192,500
Penalties Waived with Training	\$40,500	\$48,000	\$38,000	\$42,000	\$24,000
Penalties Not Waived	\$148,000	\$197,000	\$162,500	\$165,000	\$168,500

### **Public Awareness, Training and Education**

The Commission continues to strongly support and promote education and training to reduce and prevent damage incidents involving underground facilities and ensure the safety of residents and property located near those facilities. Maine's Underground Damage Prevention Rule (Chapter 895) allows the Commission to require an excavator or member operator who has violated the rule to attend an educational training program. Often, this training is offered in lieu of a financial penalty. In addition, the Commission encourages excavators and operators to periodically attend training sessions to ensure that they are up to date on the most recent technological and regulatory developments relating to underground facilities damage prevention.

The Commission also works with and financially supports training offered by the New England Committee of Managing Underground Safety Training (MUST), which includes Maine Dig Safe members, excavating contractors and underground facility location workers. The Commission also conducts its own training sessions, both at the Commission's offices as well as by request at excavator and operator locations. In 2025, the Commission completed 31 different training sessions that were attended by 993 people.

# 11. EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMUNICATION BUREAU

## 911 SERVICES IN MAINE

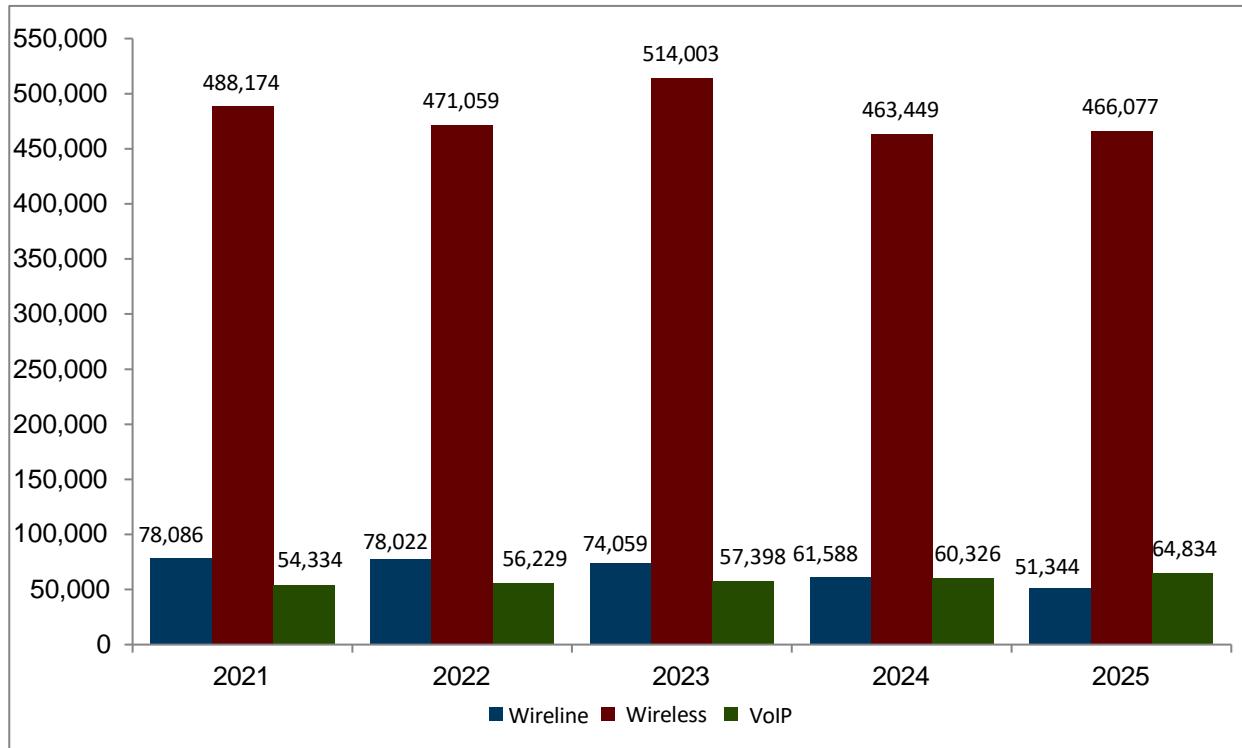
The Emergency Services Communication Bureau (ESCB) manages the statewide 911 system, which is the component of the emergency response system that delivers 911 calls and displays the telephone number and physical location of the caller at one of Maine's 25 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The ESCB is funded by the 911 surcharge which is assessed on all wireline, wireless (prepaid and postpaid) and VoIP service.

## INDUSTRY TRENDS

In Maine and the nation, wireless phones have accounted for the largest portion of payments of the 911 surcharge. Fees collected from wireline phones continue a downward trend. Overall, however, this program has adequate funding. The Commission will review the surcharge again in 2026 to determine the appropriate surcharge to meet operational needs.

In 2025, 80 percent of all calls to 911 came from wireless phones. See Chart 6.

**Chart 6 - 911 Calls**



## SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

### 911 Contract

The ESCB has a contract for Next Generation 911 Services with Consolidated Communications through June 2030. Preparation for the new system began in 2024 and the system transition was substantially completed in October 2025. The overarching objective of the agreement is to maintain all the functionality provided by the previous system while introducing new technology, features and functionality that aligns the system with current National Emergency Number Association (NENA) i3 standards and creates a platform capable of supporting new standards as they evolve.

### Docket No. 2025-00290 – Investigation of Union River Telephone Company

On October 7, 2025, the Maine Public Utilities Commission opened a formal investigation of Union River Telephone Company, a local exchange carrier owned by Direct Communications Rockland, Inc., pursuant to 25 M.R.S. § 2933(4) and 35-A M.R.S. § 1303(2), based on an August 27, 2025 letter from the Emergency Services Communication Bureau and Union River's September 10, 2025 response.

The investigation concerns Union River's compliance with 25 M.R.S. § 2933 and the ESCB's 911 rules. The ESCB discovered on July 21, 2025, that 911 calls on Union River's network were being rerouted to a 10-digit business number at the Hancock Regional Communications Center rather than delivered through the 911 system. Union River provides service in Otis, Bennington, and Aurora, Maine.

Maine law requires all local exchange carriers to provide access to the universal emergency telephone number 911 through the 911 system. Proper routing of 911 calls is essential to public safety.

**Status:** In January 2026 the Commission approved a stipulation that included a \$15,000 penalty and a credit to customers for 911 service.

### Public Law 2025, Chapter 167 — 911 Statute Updates

In 2025, the Maine Legislature enacted Public Law 2025, chapter 167, which primarily updated statutory provisions governing 911 services in Maine to be consistent with modernized 911 systems and federal standards.

Other notable changes include:

- Clarified rule-making authority rests with the Commission and made all rulemaking under the emergency services communication laws routine technical.
- Expanded the granting authority of the ESCB to allow grants to be used to consolidate two or more PSAPs and dispatch centers into a new regional PSAP and dispatch center or transfer a PSAP and all its dispatch services to another existing PSAP. It also changed the allowable funding cap to \$1,000,000 per biennium.
- Removed the requirement that the ESCB reimburse local exchange carriers and cellular and wireless telecommunications service providers for eligible expenses.
- Removed the requirement regarding the inclusion of 911 information in telephone directories.

## **Crisis Response Services**

Integration of crisis response services into 911 continued to move forward on a voluntary basis. An online training course helps familiarize 911 call takers with the stakeholder developed *Call Receipt, Acknowledgement, and Transfer of Behavior Health Calls* policy. For a PSAP to use the policy, it must first both adopt the policy, and all its call takers must complete the training. As of December 31, 2025, 303 of approximately 482 licensed and practicing Emergency Medical Dispatchers have completed the training. Fourteen PSAPs report they have implemented the policy.

## **Protocol 41: Caller in Crisis**

The ESCB's emergency medical dispatch protocol provider, the International Association of Emergency Dispatch, added a new protocol, Protocol 41, to specifically guide Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) when handling callers experiencing a mental health crisis. Protocol 41 is supported by a four-hour training course. In July, Maine became the first state to have all its EMDs certified in the protocol. It is now part of the required course work to be licensed as an EMD in Maine.

## **Call Taker and Dispatch Training**

The ESCB offers a variety of courses to ensure that 911 call takers and dispatchers have the necessary skills to handle emergency calls including basic dispatching, Emergency Medical Dispatch and Emergency Fire Dispatch protocol certification, and NG911 Equipment and Policy certification. All six sessions were close to capacity. The number of new hires at PSAPs necessitated three additional NG911 Equipment and Policy Certification courses.

Training for the new system equipment transition was provided to all PSAP trainers along with some supervisors, deputy directors and directors. This training provided hands-on instruction on the new features and functions of the new 911 system. A total of 90 people participated in these training classes. Those who did not complete the in-person training were required to complete online training.

## **PSAP Audits**

25 M.R.S. § 2926(1-A) requires the ESCB to implement and manage a quality assurance program. As part of the program, the ESCB audits each PSAP annually to ensure that each PSAP is meeting the requirements for call efficiency as well as other statutory and administrative rule requirements.

An additional focus for this year's audits was to review emergency evacuation plans and alternate dispatch sites to ensure these plans are updated and reviewed by all personnel within the agency. Another focus area was stress resiliency plans and, if a PSAP had no plan, encouragement and suggestions were offered as to how to develop a plan following the standards set by NENA and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officers (APCO). Resiliency plans have proven to help with staff retention and productivity.

## **PSAP Staffing Support Initiatives**

The ESCB initiated two projects to assist PSAPs with recruitment and retention.

The first initiative was a contract for an enterprise, cloud-based pre-employment software designed to screen applicants for emergency telecommunicator positions at one of Maine's 25 PSAPs. Many new hires fail to make it through the first year of employment. The software tests emergency telecommunicator job applicants in job-related skills such as accurate data entry,

including spelling and grammar, multi-tasking, decision making, position locating, and other skills necessary for successful employment. The software is currently in the deployment phase.

The second initiative is the development of an online training course in coordination with Southern Maine Community College that will allow people interested in a career as an emergency communications specialist to be certified in most required courses prior to hire. It is anticipated that the program will launch in early 2026.

ESCB rules require PSAPs to answer all calls in ten seconds or less 90% of the time. All but two PSAPs, Portland PD and Penobscot RCC, met this requirement. Staffing challenges can contribute to the ability to meet this metric. See Table 5 below.

**Table 5 – 2025 PSAP Call Center Efficiency**

PSAP	Incoming 911 Calls - 2024	% Calls Answered ≤ 10 seconds *	Avg Ring Duration (seconds)
Androscoggin RCC	18,836	95.3%	7
Biddeford PD	24,542	97.8%	5
Brunswick PD	12,530	97.7%	4
Cumberland RCC	34,395	93.0%	6
DPS Bangor	17,319	98.0%	6
DPS CMRCC	31,272	93.4%	7
DPS Houlton	31,225	99.0%	5
Franklin RCC	11,823	97.8%	5
Hancock RCC	17,544	98.8%	4
Knox RCC	14,380	94.4%	6
Lewiston Auburn RCC	48,686	94.5%	5
Lincoln RCC	15,071	97.9%	5
Oxford RCC	22,859	97.8%	5
Penobscot RCC	63,910	86.8%	8
Piscataquis RCC	7,047	94.1%	6
Portland PD	59,659	71.3%	10
Sagadahoc RCC	12,624	99.0%	4
Sanford PD	26,667	96.1%	6
Scarborough PD	16,012	93.1%	6
Somerset RCC	21,901	98.5%	5
Waldo RCC	13,114	95.4%	7
Washington RCC	11,387	98.9%	5
Waterville RCC	17,579	99.0%	4
Westbrook RCC	16,628	97.1%	5
York PD	15,245	93.7%	7
<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>582,255</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>6</b>

\*Based on call data January 1- October 21, 2025

## 12. CONSUMER ASSISTANCE

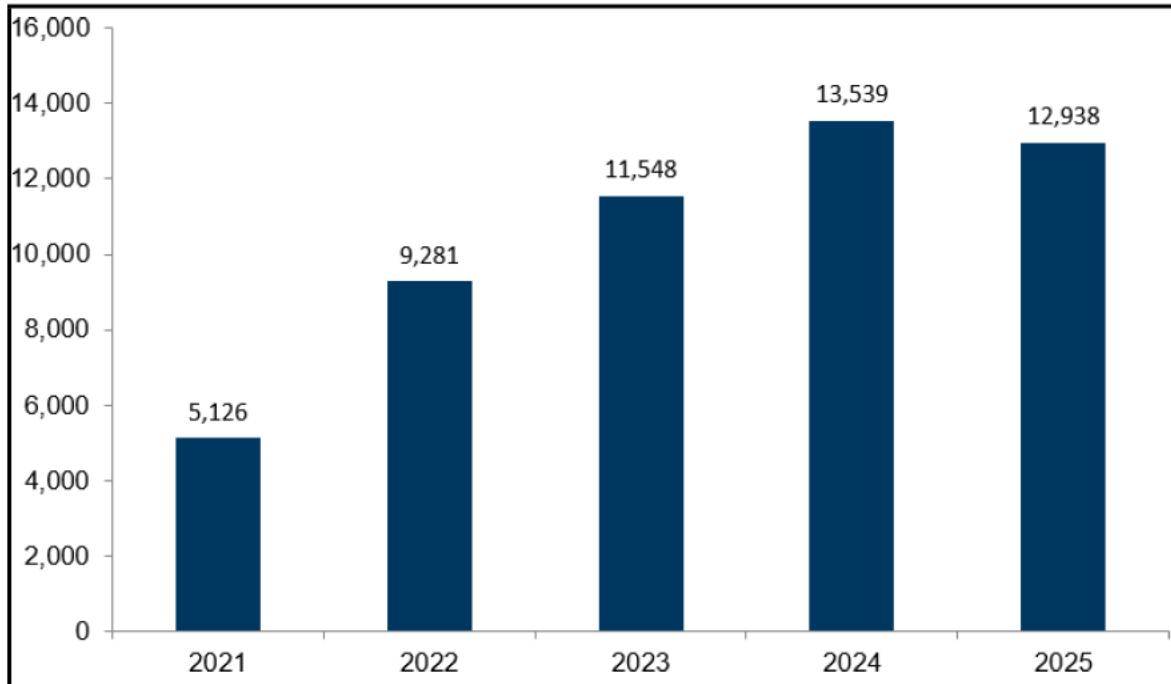
The Consumer Assistance section of the Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (C ASD) is the Commission's primary link with utility customers. The C ASD is charged with ensuring that consumers, utilities, and the public receive fair and equitable treatment through education, complaint resolution, and evaluation of utility compliance with consumer protection rules.

As part of its mission, the C ASD is responsible for educating the public and utilities about consumer rights and responsibilities and other utility-related consumer issues, for investigating and resolving disputes between consumers and utilities, and for evaluating utility compliance with State statutes, Commission rules and the utility's Terms & Conditions for service. The Commission also uses information about consumer contacts with the C ASD and other C ASD data as a basis for enforcement actions, Commission investigations, rulemakings, and in other Commission proceedings.

### C ASD Contacts

The C ASD tracks its contacts with both consumers and utilities, as detailed in Chart 7 below. Contacts take several forms, such as the general provision of information and assistance, investigation of a complaint involving a customer dispute with a utility that the parties have been unable to resolve, or processing utility requests for waivers of Commission rules. The C ASD recorded 12,938 consumer contacts in 2025.

**Chart 7 – C ASD Contacts 2021 – 2025**



## Consumer Complaints

As shown in Chart 8 below, the CASD received 1,732 complaints in 2025.

**Chart 8 - Consumer Complaints 2021 – 2025**

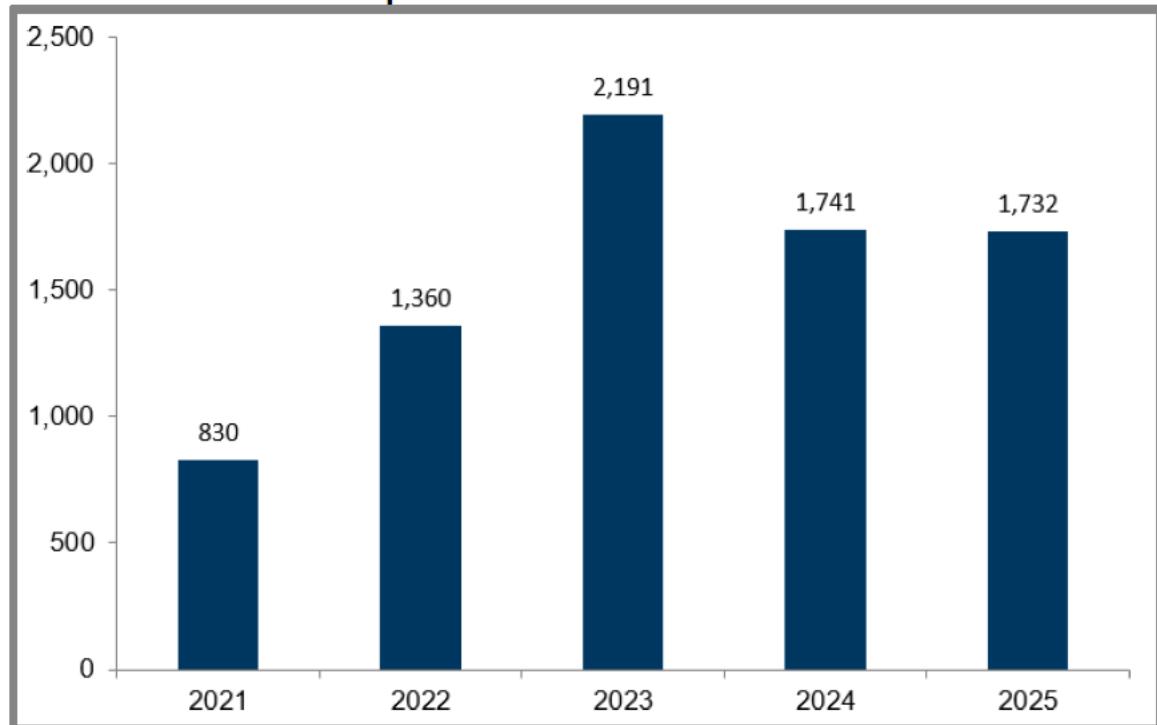
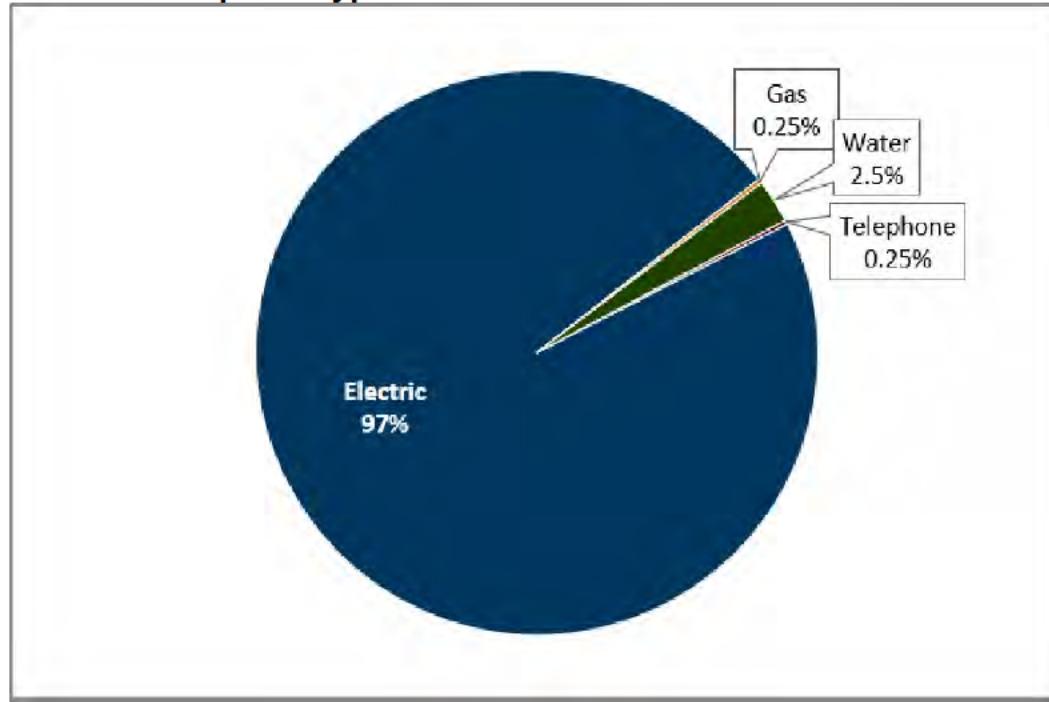


Chart 7 below breaks down complaints received by utility industry. Chart 9 shows that electric complaints represented 97% of complaints received by the CASD in 2025. We note that 97 complaints or 6% of the “electric complaints” were actually received against solar providers.

**Chart 9 - Complaint Type in 2025**



## **Refunds to Consumers**

The CASD often obtains credits or refunds for customers as part of its resolution of customer complaints against utilities. In 2025, the CASD obtained \$209,743 in refunds to customers.

## **Call Answer Time**

In 2025, the CASD received over 10,703 calls on its Consumer Hotline and answered 95% of all calls within 30 seconds. The average call-answer time was 13 seconds. This is a significant achievement given the increase in contacts and complaints.

## **LOW INCOME PROGRAMS**

While it is not the primary role of the CASD to enroll customers in low-income programs, staff does have the capability to do so. In 2025, the CASD managed LIAP enrollment requests by electric customers.

### **Docket No. 2025-00241 – Amendments to the Low-Income Assistance Program (Chapter 314)**

The Commission completed a rulemaking to update the Statewide Low-Income Assistance Program in 2025. The revised rule increases ratepayer funding for the program from \$15 million to \$33 million, implements automatic enrollment of DHHS clients beginning October 1, 2026, maintains the current enrollment and assessment processes and, beginning October 1, 2026, requires investor-owned utilities to implement a discount-rate program. Consumer-owned utility programs remain unchanged.

Key changes include expanding eligibility to customers at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for participating in DHHS assistance programs and establishing annual tiered discount rates based on four income levels. Participants will receive a percentage discount on their total bill, with new discount rates taking effect each October 1.

## **Electric Low-Income Assistance and Oxygen Pump/Ventilator Programs**

### **Pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 3214(6)**

The Commission is required by 35-A M.R.S. § 3214(6) to report annually the results of the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP) and Oxygen Pump/Ventilator benefits to the Utilities and Energy Committee. The report must include the number of participants in each program and amounts paid each month, which is shown below in Table 6. It must also include an assessment of the effectiveness of the oxygen pump and ventilator benefit in covering only those electric charges directly related to use of an oxygen pump or ventilator.

This assessment requirement was added to the LIAP reporting requirements in 2008 due to a problem associated with the provision of oxygen pump benefits. The problem resulted in some eligible customers receiving an oxygen pump benefit that exceeded the amount of the customer's entire electric bill. To address this issue, the Legislature adopted MSRA § 3214 (6)(C), which requires the Commission to provide an assessment of whether the oxygen pump benefit and the ventilator benefit cover only those electric charges directly related to use of an oxygen pump or ventilator by the program participants. In response to this directive, the Commission revised Chapter 314 by reducing the estimated daily and monthly kWh consumption amounts used to calculate the oxygen pump/ventilator benefit and by prohibiting a benefit from exceeding the customer's total electricity usage. These changes have resolved the problem.

**Table 6 – Program Statistics based on quarterly reports from electric utilities**

Month	LIAP Program		Oxygen Program		Ventilator Program	
	Number of Participants	Benefit Amount	Number of Participants	Benefit Amount	Number of Participants	Benefit Amount
Oct 2024	4,684	\$1,725,140	36	\$6,765	-	-
Nov 2024	15,216	\$4,053,439	112	\$10,930	1	\$422
Dec 2024	23,917	\$3,425,724	386	\$74,819	5	\$1,304
Jan 2025	28,075	\$1,387,203	628	\$47,312	5	-
Feb 2025	32,445	\$1,530,902	895	\$49,386	6	\$220
Mar 2025	35,792	\$1,452,637	1,189	\$53,242	6	-
Apr 2025	38,691	\$1,010,970	1,426	\$14,808	6	-
May 2025	41,899	\$1,287,813	1,660	\$12,934	6	-
June 2025	43,813	\$829,961	2,047	\$102,881	7	\$441
July 2025	43,628	\$254,104	2,477	\$54,132	8	\$460
Aug 2025	43,657	\$83,194	2,773	\$29,064	10	\$230
Sept 2025	43,620	\$5,966,091	3,063	\$30,568	10	\$192
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$23,007,178</b>		<b>\$486,841</b>		<b>\$3,269</b>

## 13. SUMMARY OF LAW COURT APPEALS

### **Snakeroot Solar, LLC v. Public Utilities Commission — Law Court Docket No. PUC-24-322**

Issue: Snakeroot Solar, LLC (Snakeroot) appealed the Commission's denial of its petition for a good-cause exemption from the December 31, 2024, deadline set by 35-A M.R.S. § 3209-A(7) for a generating facility to reach commercial operation in order to qualify for the State's net energy billing (NEB) program. Without the exemption, Snakeroot's Pittsfield photovoltaic facility would be ineligible to participate in NEB.

Action: The Commission found that the delays cited by Snakeroot — including the cluster study process and estimated grid upgrade timelines — were inherent aspects of the interconnection process and did not constitute “external delays” outside the facility’s control.

Outcome: On July 15, 2025, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court sitting as the Law Court (Law Court) affirmed the Commission’s order, holding that the Commission’s interpretation of the statute and its findings were supported by the record and were not an abuse of discretion. After concluding the language of the statute was ambiguous, the Court deferred to the Commission’s reasonable interpretation and upheld the denial of the good cause exemption based on a finding that inherent delays in the interconnection process and the time required for grid upgrades were not “external delays” for purposes of a good cause exemption.

### **Berwick Solar LLC v. Public Utilities Commission — Law Court Docket No. PUC-25-51**

Issue: Berwick Solar LLC (Berwick) appealed the Commission’s dismissal of its complaint filed pursuant to Section 17(C) of Chapter 324 by Berwick against Central Maine Power Company (CMP), challenging the timing and itemization of final invoices issued by CMP and related to the interconnection of Berwick’s 3.545 MW photovoltaic generating facility. In its Complaint, Berwick sought a ruling by the Commission that it was not obligated to pay its share of pooled interconnection costs because the final cost reconciliation invoice was sent after the deadline for cost reconciliation set forth in Chapter 324.

Action: In dismissing Berwick’s Complaint, the Commission found that there was nothing in Chapter 324 barring CMP from billing Berwick for the actual costs of interconnection after the deadline set forth in the Rule, as well as nothing absolving Berwick of its obligation under the Interconnection Agreement and Chapter 324 to remit to CMP the actual cost to interconnect Berwick’s project to the system. The Commission noted that CMP’s failure to comply with the deadlines set forth in Chapter 324 may present grounds for an investigation that results in potential fines against the utility, however, the Commission was without authority or jurisdiction to grant Berwick the relief it was requesting.

Outcome: The Law Court will heard oral argument on Berwick’s appeal on January 7, 2026.

### **Ellsworth Solar LLC v. Office of the Public Advocate — Law Court Docket No. PUC-25-60**

Issue: Ellsworth Solar LLC (Ellsworth) appealed the Commission’s denial of its petition for a good-cause exemption from the December 31, 2024, deadline set by 35-A M.R.S. § 3209-A(9) for a generating facility to reach commercial operation in order to qualify for the State’s NEB program. Berwick alleged the delays in interconnecting its project were related to Versant Power’s (Versant) equipment upgrades, which extended its construction timeframe beyond the statutory deadline.

Action: In denying Ellsworth’s petition, the Commission found that the initial construction schedule delivered by Versant to the developer in April 2024 indicated the project would reach commercial operation in March 2025, which was outside the statutory deadline for reaching commercial operation under the statute. Ellsworth argued that during a meeting with Versant in March 2023, the utility

shared a screenshot of a draft construction schedule that suggested the project would reach commercial operation in November 2024, and this was the schedule on which Ellsworth claims it relied. The Commission did not find this argument persuasive, noting the only evidence of a March 2023 schedule was Ellsworth's statements, which were rebutted by testimonial and documentary evidence in the record. The Commission ruled that—in addressing a petition for good cause exemption under Section 3209-A(9)—the operative construction schedule on which the developer may reasonably rely is the first schedule physically delivered to the developer by the utility and identified as the construction schedule for interconnection.

Outcome: The Law Court held oral arguments on Ellsworth's appeal on December 11, 2025.

## 14. FISCAL INFORMATION

The Commission is required by 35-A M.R.S. §120 to report annually to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology on its planned expenditures for the fiscal year and on its use of funds in the previous year. This section of the report fulfills this statutory requirement and provides additional information regarding the Commission's budget. All references in this section are for fiscal years, July 1 to June 30.

In FY2025, the Commission regulated electric, gas, telephone, water and water common carrier utilities, enforced Maine's underground facilities damage prevention law, and managed the state-wide 911 system.

The Commission operates with two main programs and funds: The Emergency Services Communications Fund and the Regulatory Related Funds as detailed below.

### **The Emergency Services Communications Fund (9-1-1 Fund)**

This fund had an unencumbered balance of \$9,990,811 and an encumbered balance of \$1,795,938 brought forward from FY2024. In FY2025 \$7,816,078 was expended. An unencumbered balance of \$8,899,144 and an encumbered balance of \$2,146,012 were brought forward to FY2026. The 9-1-1 surcharge collected in FY2025 was \$6,474,287. The prepaid wireless fees collected in FY2025 were \$816,213. The recommended 9-1-1 surcharge is \$0.35 per line in FY2026.

### **PUC Regulatory Related Accounts**

#### **Regulatory Fund**

The authorized Regulatory Fund assessment for FY2025 was \$14,085,347. An unencumbered balance of \$2,136,592 and an encumbered balance of \$555,054 were brought forward from FY2024. The Commission spent \$13,747,180 in FY2025.

An unencumbered balance of \$1,159,691 and an encumbered balance of \$694,998 were brought forward to FY2026. The encumbered balances generally represent ongoing contracts.

#### **Reimbursement Fund**

In FY2025, the Commission collected \$800 in filing fees and \$375 in copying fees. Also, the Commission collected \$186,566 in Digsafe Penalties, \$46,957.50 for intervenor funding (Docket 2024-00117) and \$315,000 was collected in filing fees (Docket 2023-00024). An unencumbered balance of \$727,968 and an encumbered balance of \$139,621 were brought forward from FY2024. During FY2025, \$299,451 was expended. An unencumbered balance of \$759,345 and an encumbered balance of \$137,969 were brought forward to FY2026.

## **The Budget in Perspective**

In June 2025, the Legislature approved the Commission's biennial budget. Table 7 details the Commission's FY26 expenditure plan including position count, based on original work program.

**Table 7 - FY2026 Work Program**

<b>Regulatory Fund</b>	
Position Count	71
Personal Services	11,108,765
All Other	3,712,144
Capital	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,820,909</b>
<b>Commission Reimbursement Fund</b>	
All Other	50,000
<b>Commission Damage Prevention</b>	
Personal Services	58,934
All Other	1,066
Capital	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Oversight and Evaluation Fund</b>	
All Other	252,660
<b>Prepaid Wireless Fee Fund</b>	
All Other	1,992,409
<b>Emergency Services Comm. Bureau (E-911)</b>	
Position Count	10
Personal Services	1,355,867
All Other	6,516,839
Capital	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,872,706</b>
<b>Unused NEB Credits for Low-Income Assistance</b>	
All other	500
<b>Interconnection Ombudsman Fund</b>	
Position Count	1
Personal Services	185,746
All Other	15,891
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,637</b>

## The Regulatory Fund Assessment in Perspective

Table 8 below details the most recent five years of Regulatory Fund assessments from Annual Reports filed by the utilities with the Commission. They include revenues for the previous year ending December 31. Calculations are made to determine what percentage of the revenues reported by regulated utilities will produce the amount authorized by statute. The derived factors that will raise the authorized amount are applied against the reported revenues of each utility.

Under 35-A M.R.S. § 116, on May 1 of each year the Commission sends an assessment notice to each utility with a July 1 due date. Funds derived from this assessment are used during the fiscal year beginning July 1.

Assessment breakdown by utility sector is described below in graph and Table 9.

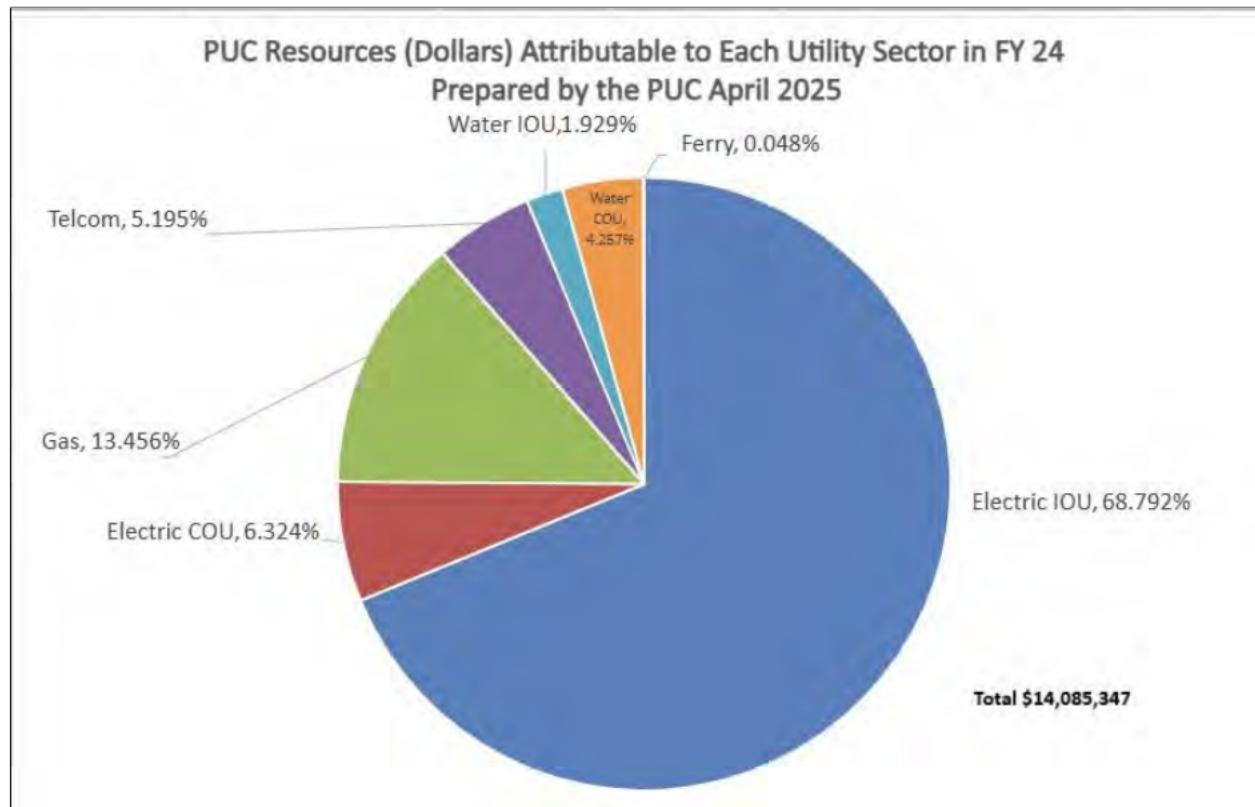
**Table 8 - Regulatory Fund Assessments for the Past Five Years**

Year	Electric Revenues	Telecom Revenues	Water Revenues	Gas Revenues	Water Carriers Revenues	Total Utilities Revenues	Amount Billed
2020	440,030,482	153,789,147	162,436,723	147,950,803	6,037,000	910,244,155	9,400,542
2021	477,075,093	152,582,462	168,297,639	176,426,217	5,420,783	979,802,194	10,319,348
2022	476,198,138	152,296,497	169,820,139	182,389,888	4,765,072	985,469,733	11,259,250
2023	548,668,687	155,948,443	177,222,858	200,608,182	5,473,594	1,087,921,764	12,399,719
2024	662,940,874	158,665,816	188,619,870	205,174,850	5,333,333	1,220,734,743	14,085,347

**Table 9 – Total Assessment by Utility Sector**

Sector	Assessment
Electric	10,580,282
Telecommunications	731,727
Natural Gas	1,895,322
Water	871,258
Water Common Carrier	6,758

**Chart 10**



## 15. COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES

**Philip L. Bartlett II, J.D.**, was appointed to the Commission as Chair in June 2019 by Governor Janet Mills. Bartlett is also Governor Mills' appointed manager to the board of the New England States Committee on Electricity (NESCOE), and he serves on the Executive Committee of the New England Conference of Public Utilities Commissioners (NECPUC) and on the board of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). He was also nominated by NARUC to serve on the Federal and State Current Issues Collaborative.

Prior to his appointment, he practiced law with Scaccia, Bartlett & Chabot. He served in the Maine Senate from 2004 to 2012 and was elected by his peers to serve as Senate Majority Leader from 2008 to 2010. Bartlett chaired the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee as well as the Joint Select Committee on Maine's Energy Future and he served on the Government Oversight Committee, Natural Resources Committee and Labor Committee. He taught micro and macroeconomics at the collegiate level. Chairman Bartlett holds a juris doctorate degree from Harvard Law School. He completed his undergraduate work at Tufts University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude majoring in Economics and Political Science. His initial term expired in March 2025 and he was reconfirmed to a second term which expires March 31, 2031.

**Patrick J. Scully, Esq.** was appointed to the Commission in June 2021 by Governor Janet Mills. Prior to his appointment, Scully was employed with Bernstein Shur, where he spent his 36-year career as a municipal, energy and utility regulatory attorney. He was named CEO of the firm in January 2014 and retired at the end of 2019. He has a BA degree from Dartmouth College with a major in Biology and Environmental Studies and he earned his JD degree, magna cum laude, from the University of Maine School of Law. He is recognized by Best Lawyers in America and Chambers USA for his energy law and administrative law work and is AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell. His term expires in March 2027.

**Carolyn C. Gilbert** was appointed to the Commission in May 2023 by Governor Janet Mills. Prior to her appointment, she was a Managing Consultant at Daymark Energy Advisors where she worked with utility commissions across the country on renewable energy policy and economics. She began her career as a consulting environmental engineer for municipal water and wastewater utilities. Commissioner Gilbert has served as the Treasurer of the New England Conference of Public Utilities Commissioners (NECPUC), as a Director of the Northeast Power Coordinating Council (NPCC), and as the Maine Chapter Chair of New England Women in Energy and Environment (NEWIEE). Gilbert holds a Master of Business Administration from the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. She completed her undergraduate work at Dartmouth College and holds Bachelor's degrees in Engineering and Environmental Earth Sciences. Her term expires in March 2029.

## 16. PAST COMMISSIONERS

1915 – 2025

* Benjamin F. Cleaves	1915-1919	Cheryl Harrington	1982-1991
William B. Skelton	1915-1919	* David Moskovitz	1984-1989
Charles W. Mullen	1915-1916	* Kenneth Gordon	1988-1993
John E. Bunker	1917-1917	Elizabeth Paine	1989-1995
Herbert W. Trafton	1918-1936	Heather F. Hunt	1995-1998
* Charles E. Gurney	1921-1927	William M. Nugent	1991-2003
Albert Greenlaw	1924-1933	* Thomas L. Welch	1993-2005
* Albert J. Stearns	1928-1934		2011-2014
Edward Chase	1934-1940	Stephen L. Diamond	1998-2006
* Frank E. Southard	1935-1953	* Sharon M. Reishus	2003-2010
C. Carroll Blaisdell	1937-1941	* Kurt Adams	2005-2008
James L. Boyle	1941-1947	Vendean Vafiades	2007-2012
George E. Hill	1942-1953	* Jack Cashman	2008-2011
Edgar F. Corliss	1948-1954	David P. Littell	2010-2015
* Sumner T. Pike	1954-1955	Carlisle J.T. McLean	2015-2017
Frederick N. Allen	1954-1967	* Mark A. Vannoy	2012-2019
Richard J. McMahon	1955-1961	R. Bruce Williamson	2015-2021
* Thomas E. Delahanty	1955-1958	Randall Davis	2017-2023
* David M. Marshall	1958-1969		
* Earle M. Hillman	1962-1968		
* John G. Feehan	1968-1977	<b>* Denotes Chairman</b>	
Leslie H. Stanley	1970-1976		
* Peter Bradford	1971-1977		
	1982-1987		
Lincoln Smith	1975-1982		
* Ralph H. Gelder	1977-1983		
Diantha A. Carrigan	1977-1982		

## 17. SPECIFIC STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Table 10 below illustrates where the specific statutory requirements for inclusion in the Commission's annual report can be located. It includes the requirements pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 120 and 35-A M.R.S. § 3805(1).

**Table 10**

<b>Statutory Reference</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b>	<b>Page</b>
§120(3)	Regional Issues-Electric	17
§120(7)(B)	Emergency response plans ( <a href="#">Section 3144, subsection 5</a> )	16
§3805(1)	Beneficial Electrification	16
§3217(4)	Direct Sales of electricity to commercial and industrial customers.	17
§120(6)(A)	Significant developments (§3195.) related to rate-adjustment and alternative rate mechanisms	25
§120(6)(B)	Alternative Rate-Making Mechanism Required Reporting 35-A M.R.S. § 4706 for Gas Utilities	23
§120(7)(E)	Assistance programs for low-income customers of gas utilities (§4706-B, subsection 4)	23
§120(7)(F)	Rate-adjustment mechanism for water utilities ( <a href="#">Section 6102-A, subsection 2</a> )	25
§ 7508(4)	Public Interest Payphones (PIP)	29
§120(5)	Telephone exemptions	29
§120(7)(A)	The performance of each of the public safety answering points in the State during the previous calendar year, including the results of the bureau's quality assurance program audits under <a href="#">section 2926, subsection 1-A</a> and any recommendations of the bureau relating to the emergency dispatching standards, practices and procedures of public safety answering points	38
§120(7)(A)	9-1-1 Bureau's recommendations for amending existing and enacting new law to improve the E-9-1-1 system	36
§120(7)(C)	Low Income Assistance	41

	Program, Oxygen Pump, and Ventilator Program participation information by month ( <u>Section 3214, subsection 6</u> )	
§120(1)(2)(2-A) and (2-B)	Budget; Various fees; Filing fees and penalties; Commission expenses; and planned expenditures related to Investor-owned and Consumer-owned utilities	45
§120(7)(A)	9-1-1 Bureau planned expenditures, use of funds previous year, 9-1-1 surcharges ( <u>Title 35-A, section 120, subsection 7</u> )	45

