

**To: Chairman Vose and Members of the House Science, Technology & Energy Committee**

**Testimony from Portsmouth City Councilor John Tabor, on behalf of the City of Portsmouth, IN SUPPORT OF HB 760 regarding default service rates and recovery for over or under collection.**

The City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire joined the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) in 2022 and in February 2023, adopted Portsmouth Community Power as the default electric power supplier to Portsmouth customers previously served by Eversource. Since launching service in April 2023, CPCNH has saved the more than 11,500 Portsmouth Community Power electric customers **\$2.91 million** by purchasing strategically in a portfolio of long and short-term contracts while also offering them expanded renewable energy choices not offered by the default provider Eversource.

As a member of the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH), Portsmouth is part of a statewide non-profit power agency and one of more than fifty Community Power programs statewide whose electric customers have saved a collective \$20 million in electric rates thanks to CPCNH's ability, authorized by **NH RSA 53-E** (allowing local governments to procure electric power on behalf of their residents, businesses, and municipal accounts) to have strategic control over rates, allowing CPCNH to hedge electric power purchases against market volatility and thereby directly benefiting New Hampshire electric customers.

HB 760 protects Community Power customers from a troubling deviation from business-as-usual ratemaking practices by Public Utilities Commission (PUC). It is timely legislative action which, CPCNH argues, prevents the very real threat that “customers would end up paying twice for energy supply – once to their chosen supplier (i.e., Portsmouth Community Power) and once to their electric distribution utility through a compulsory wires charge. By putting an end to this unfair cost shift, it protects fair market competition and customer choice in NH's energy market.”

Imagine if CPCNH or any other third party energy supplier found their rates did not cover their costs, and were allowed to reach into the pocket of those utility customers who were not their contracted clients to offset their losses. It would be fundamentally unfair. Yet this is what the investor owned utilities will be able to do by PUC rules if the utility finds supply charges don't cover costs in a particular rate period. HB 760 prevents this unfair reality from occurring.

As City Councilor and Chair of the Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee that oversees Portsmouth's membership in the Community Power Coalition of NH, and on behalf of Portsmouth's electric customers, I urge the House Science, Technology & Energy Committee to vote to pass HB 760 because the bill supports competition, saves taxpayers money and prevents utilities from privatizing profits and socializing losses.