



February 13, 2023

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair
The Hon. Stanley Paige Zeigler, Jr., Co-chair
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 376, "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program"

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Zeigler, and members of the EUT Committee:

I represent the Aroostook Partnership (AP), a unique private/public partnership of nearly 100 businesses, the Northern Maine Development Commission and the three colleges in Aroostook County. The mission of the Partnership is to speak with one voice to engage the private sector leadership, talents and resources to ensure the economic survival and growth of Aroostook County. In alignment with our mission, I am writing in opposition to L.D. 376, "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program."

AP's primary mission is to drive economic development in Aroostook County and a great deal of our economic development focus is centered around using our abundant natural resources. Along with forestry and agriculture, we also have another significant natural resource, and that is our potential for generating renewable wind energy. AP has been supportive of all the major wind developers in Northern Maine over the past several years and continue to support the prospect of this project being built in our region.

AP is firmly in support of further developing wind in our region provided a County TIF district can be established to ensure tax revenues largely remain in Aroostook County to further support economic development within our rural region.

Wind project development like this project at King Pine is good for Maine and Aroostook's economy for several reasons:

1. The construction phase of this multimillion-dollar project will support many local and statewide construction companies and contractors.
2. Those companies will spend a great deal of that revenue on local services such as food, lodging, fuel, parts and repair of their equipment, further benefiting Aroostook and other rural Maine areas where the transmission line will be built.
3. This project will generate millions in tax dollars which, through well-planned TIFs, can benefit the rural economically depressed counties in which this project will be built.



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4. The 1,000MW of low cost electricity generated will create downward pressure on electricity rates and standard offer pricing in Maine.
5. This project would create much-needed alternative revenue sources for forest and agricultural landowners through long-term lease agreements.
6. This project would create technical jobs with higher than average salaries and benefits which are exactly the kind of jobs we hope to grow in rural Maine.
7. Nearby Northern Maine Community College offers a Wind Power Technology program to meet the increased demands expected in Aroostook for wind power skilled employees.
8. This project will offer tremendous local benefits negotiated with the areas around the project sites.

Additionally, our Governor has set aggressive goals for generating clean energy in the coming years and, with little hope of hydro development in Maine, wind, solar and biomass remain our best options to achieve these goals. The challenge is locating the projects in wind-rich regions where the residents need and welcome the economic impacts, but also has the land available for the developer to build or upgrade merchant transmission lines to deliver the power to the grid. AP believes that this 20-year PUC contract, in combination with a supportive wind development region in the Unorganized Territories of Aroostook, presents a great opportunity for Maine to move closer to achieving its renewable generation goals.

From a Maine ratepayer perspective, we believe Massachusetts agreeing to procure 40% of the project will make this a much more appealing and rate-beneficial contract for Maine ratepayers. From an economic development perspective, wind development is a win-win for the County and the state of Maine in that we receive the many benefits outlined above while Maine and our planet benefit from replacing fossil fuel generation with clean energy produced right in Maine.

Aroostook Partnership fully supports the development of this renewable infrastructure project in our region and sincerely hopes the Legislature will stay the course with the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.

Respectfully,



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