



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

John "Jack" E. Ducharme III

34 Heald Street
Madison, ME 04950
Cell: (207) 431-0775
Jack.Ducharme@legislature.maine.gov

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF LD 376 FEB. 24, 2023

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is Jack Ducharme and I represent District 71 - which includes the towns of Cornville, Madison, and Norridgewock - in the Maine House. I am here today to present LD 376, **An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program**. In short, this bill repeals the law establishing the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.

By way of background, the original bill, **An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine**, was passed in the First Regular Session of the 130th under the hammer in both houses. It is worth noting that the Legislature was still meeting at the Augusta Civic Center due to COVID at the time. It is also worth noting that came out of the Committee had a divided report, with one lone member opposing the bill. It is my opinion that this bill should have had at least had some debate on the floor of the House because this project will cost the ratepayers of Maine over a billion dollars. Proponents say it will be \$1.00 per month per rate payer...a small price to pay for green renewable power!

The projections for energy cost savings cannot be verified because of the scope of the project and the vagaries of wind power. The developer seems to project costs savings to demonstrate lower development costs by subtracting the proposed \$100 million savings in energy over 20 years from the cost of the project of \$1.8 Billion over 30 years. Even if Massachusetts ratepayers pick up 40% of the tab for this it will cost Mainers more than a billion dollars!

District 71
Cornville, Madison, and Norridgewock

The developer plans to build 179 windmills on 175,000 acres of land in Aroostook County, connect them to a massive .345 KV DC transmission line that will run down from the Houlton area, likely passing by the crown jewel of Maine, Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin.

I have no problem with the development of renewable energy sources, nor do I have any issue with them doing this to enhance the economy of Northern Maine. My hope is that every Maine region has a vibrant, sustainable and growing economy.

The issue with this bill is that its' passage was done during a COVID affected session. It was presented via Zoom, this "new" technology that we experienced in 2021, before this committee with very little public input. At the time of the original public hearing, I'm not confident that many Mainers even knew that they could participate by Zoom in Legislative committee meetings. Of the 20 entities that provided testimony for or against the bill, 14 were in support, 1 opposed with 5 testifying neither for nor against. All 14 in support were either potential contractors for the proposal, connected with the Governor's Energy Office or would, in some way, benefit from the passage of the proposal. The single voice of opposition focused on the overall issues with wind power; the intermittency, the cost to develop, the carbon footprint of developing wind power, the potential environmental damage of a such power line to transmit the green power to users.

This Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program should be reviewed by the public at large. The scrutiny of the NECEC corridor demonstrates the public desire to protect special places like Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin. There was no such vetting of this bill and I hope that my bill will provide such a forum for the people of Maine.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have if I can.