



February 14, 2023

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Paige Ziegler, Chair
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in opposition to LD 376, "An Act To Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program"

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

My name is Jeremy Payne and I am a principal with Cornerstone Government Affairs Group here to testify in opposition to LD 376 on behalf of our client LS Power Grid Maine.

As you may know, recently, LS Power Grid Maine, an affiliate of LS Power, was selected to build transmission facilities in order to facilitate adding new renewable energy from Aroostook County to Maine's energy mix. The Maine Public Utilities Commission ("PUC") unanimously voted to approve entering into contracts to fund 60% of the transmission and wind projects in Aroostook County, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Energy Resources has also approved their participation for funding up to 40% of the projects. Both states decided to approve these projects because of their ability to help each state cost effectively meet their renewable energy goals while also creating new investment and job opportunities. Repealing the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program now would forgo this unique opportunity to develop these in-state resources with the majority of the benefits to Maine ratepayers, but with another state helping to foot the bill.

LS Power was founded in 1990 and has raised just under \$50 billion in debt and equity capital to construct and invest in energy infrastructure across the United States. The company is the nation's leading competitive transmission developer and owner, having constructed approximately 700 miles of transmission lines in Nevada, Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware with an additional 100+ miles and multiple substations under construction.

They are also the owner/operator of the 132-megawatt Kibby wind farm right here in Franklin County that is part of a diverse national mix of generation assets including gas, solar, wind, hydro, biofuels and battery storage, as well as electric vehicle charging, demand response and microgrids.

LS Power is a strong advocate for competition in the electric transmission space. Through their unique solutions and cost containment measures adopted nationwide through competitive

solicitations, they have become the leading developer of transmission system improvements and upgrades, similar to those contemplated in its Aroostook County project.

Passing LD 376 would send a damaging signal to the energy marketplace at exactly the moment we are seeking to make a cost-effective renewable energy transition and attract new taxable investment, jobs and growth opportunities for Aroostook County and beyond. Many companies, including LS Power Grid Maine, invested time, money and resources to ready their bids for competitive review by the PUC staff and ultimately the commissioners, and this legislation seeks to change the rules not just in the middle of the game, but in fact after the referees have blown the final whistle at the game's end. This would have a chilling effect on potential new energy investment in Maine.

The new Aroostook projects are an important step toward bringing more cost-effective renewable energy to Maine. Being able to interconnect Maine-made, low-cost renewable energy will reduce the need for more expensive alternatives and lower market prices while growing our economy and reducing emissions.

Importantly, the LS Power Grid Maine transmission facilities will help unlock 1,200 megawatts of renewable energy, which provides benefits in Maine and across New England. As found by the PUC this project was found to be the most cost-effective and efficient proposal to fulfill the objectives of the legislature. LS Power is especially excited at the prospect of helping to provide new economic opportunity and prosperity in Aroostook County.

All of these efforts are underway because of the bipartisan efforts of Senate President Troy Jackson, and Senate Republican Leader Trey Stewart in the spring of 2021 – through their visionary leadership there is a great opportunity to finally do what other legislatures have been unable to accomplish: unlock the renewable energy potential of Northern Maine.

LS Power Grid Maine looks forward to engaging with all stakeholders – community members, elected officials, schools and municipalities, environmental and conservation organizations, regulators, and many others – to ensure they deliver the most beneficial project possible with the least amount of community and environmental impacts.

We respectfully urge this committee to vote ought not to pass.

Thank you.