



February 14, 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:

On behalf of Longroad Energy (Longroad), I am writing in opposition to L.D. 376, "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program."

Longroad develops and operates solar and wind energy projects in markets across the United States. In Maine, we employ a dozen people including Maine Maritime Academy graduates and U.S. military veterans who operate hundreds of renewable energy power plants across the country from our Scarborough office. The Longroad team has been developing renewable energy projects in Maine for over 15 years, and during that time, we have invested over a billion dollars in the process of developing approximately 700 megawatts (MW) of clean energy here in the state.

The Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued a request for proposals (RFP) in November 2021 pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development statute that was developed by the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee during the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Longroad submitted a bid for its King Pine Wind project in that RFP process in May 2022, which was selected by the Commission this past October. In response to encouragement by the Commission, Longroad worked to engage Massachusetts in this process, which led to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources deciding to partner with Maine in late December. Two weeks ago, the Commission determined that a 60/40 split between Maine and Massachusetts was in the public interest and approved term sheets with Longroad for King Pine Wind and with LS Power for a transmission line.

King Pine Wind is a 1,000 MW wind project on commercial forestlands in and around Webbertown Township, west/northwest of Houlton. It is expected to generate enough electricity to meet the annual needs of the equivalent of 450,000 average households, with the first power flowing in late 2028. The project will deliver power to the Maine and New England grid through a 345-kilovolt line to be developed by LS Power.

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King Pine will produce electricity at a cost below the market rate for power, and it will be the largest, cheapest source of new electricity – clean or otherwise – in New England. The approximately \$2 billion project will also provide significant economic benefits to northern Maine, including millions of dollars in property taxes and community benefits.

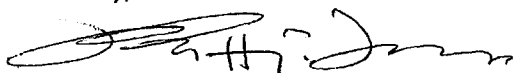
For decades, the renewable resources of northern Maine – originally, hydropower and biomass, now joined by wind and solar – have been held back by a lack of transmission capacity. In fact, most of Aroostook County is not directly tied into the U.S. electricity grid, instead relying on the Maritimes control area. Without a practical path to the ISO-New England (ISO-NE) system, investment that would go into new clean energy resources in the County has gone elsewhere for many years. The intent of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program was to unlock opportunities for this part of the state, which is what has begun to happen in the 20 months since it became law.

On the basis of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program law passed in 2021, Longroad has made significant investments in the King Pine project. As proposed by L.D. 376, repealing this law would strand that investment and undercut the Maine investment climate. The northern Maine law passed this committee on a 11-1 vote, thanks to leadership on both sides of the aisle, and was enacted by both houses under the hammer. If a Maine business cannot invest with confidence that a law passed with that level of support will endure, it begs the question whether there is any statute that businesses can trust that won't be overturned.

Finally, if Maine hopes to reach its goals of cheaper and cleaner power, the energy resources of northern Maine must be utilized. Electricity prices are very high today because the fossil fuels that set the market are expensive. Getting off these costly and volatile sources of power is the only way to sustainably reduce the electricity price burden on Maine residents and businesses. Furthermore, a large renewable power resource like King Pine is needed to meet the state's 2030 climate goal, according to the *Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment* released by the Governor's Energy Office last year.

Longroad urges you to reject L.D. 376. Thanks for the opportunity to share our views on this bill.

Sincerely,



Matthew T. Kearns  
Chief Development Officer  
Longroad Energy Holdings, LLC