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DAN BURGESS
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNOR'S
ENERGY OFFICE

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program L.D. 376

**GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE
February 14, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Celina Cunningham and I am the Deputy Director of the Governor's Energy Office.

The GEO testifies in opposition to L.D. 376.

L.D. 376 would eliminate the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program. Specifically, the bill repeals the relevant statutory language that established the Program.

The language that this bill proposes to remove was enacted in 2021 in P.L. 2021 Ch. 380 (L.D. 1710), which passed the Legislature with bipartisan support and was signed by the Governor. The Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program was established "to remove obstacles to the use of and promote development of the substantial renewable energy resources in northern Maine." The law sets forth goals of the program that include meeting climate and clean energy requirements for the state, developing the necessary transmission to unlock northern Maine renewable energy resources, and supporting economic opportunities in northern Maine. It sets forth a timeline for the Public Utilities Commission to issue request for proposals associated with a transmission line and renewable energy generation projects.

Following enactment, the PUC issued requests for proposals for northern Maine renewable energy and transmission. On November 1, 2022, the PUC issued conditional approval of two projects: the LS Power transmission project consisting of a 345 kilovolt double circuit transmission line, which will be capable of delivering up to 1,200 megawatts of renewable power from Aroostook County into the ISO New England transmission system, and the Longroad Energy wind project, which is the 1,000 megawatt King Pine Wind Generation Project. In December, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts agreed to contract for up to 40 percent of the projects. On January 31, 2023, the Maine PUC approved the two projects.

The Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program is a key step toward achievement of our state's emissions reduction and renewable energy requirements, and will support economic opportunities in northern Maine. Maine households and businesses are confronting volatile energy costs resulting from New England's longstanding overreliance on expensive, imported fossil fuels to heat our homes and businesses and generate our electricity. By bringing substantial new clean energy resources

to Maine and our neighbors, these projects can help reduce energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The GEO opposes repealing the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Celina Cunningham", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Celina Cunningham
Deputy Director, Governor's Energy Office