132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document	**No. 1726**
H.P. 1153	House of Representatives, April 17, 2025

An Act to Enhance the Coordination and Effectiveness of Integrated Distribution Grid Planning

Reference to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative RUNTE of York.
Cosponsored by Senator LAWRENCE of York and
Representatives: KESSLER of South Portland, MCINTYRE of Lowell, SACHS of Freeport, WARREN of Scarborough, WEBB of Durham, Senator: GROHOSKI of Hancock.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 2 MRSA §9, sub-§3, ¶D-1 is enacted to read:

D-1. Seek to ensure consistency and accuracy in energy planning and analysis, including, but not limited to, through the use in all energy planning and analysis conducted by the office of an energy forecasting method consistent with the method used by the office in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan as required by paragraph C. The office shall ensure that the energy forecasting method used in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan is made available for use by other state agencies;

Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§1, ¶A-1 is enacted to read:

A-1. "Energy storage system" has the same meaning as in section 3481, subsection 6.

Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§6 is enacted to read:

6. Grid plan alignment with procurements. Notwithstanding any provision of this Title to the contrary, in developing requests for proposals, conducting procurements and negotiating agreements for energy and energy storage systems, the commission shall use the grid plans developed by covered utilities to seek to optimize grid capacity, including in evaluating the site location of energy generation projects and energy storage systems, and minimize the need for capital investment in the transmission and distribution system.

Sec. 4. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§7 is enacted to read:

7. Integration of distributed energy resources. In administering this section, the commission shall seek to ensure the integration of distributed energy resources by developing clear technical standards for covered utilities.

Sec. 5. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§8 is enacted to read:

8. Standardization of method; energy supply and demand forecasting. The commission shall, by order, adopt a method for energy supply and demand forecasting that is consistent with the method used by the Governor's Energy Office in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan under Title 2, section 9, subsection 3, paragraph C and require a covered utility to use this method in its grid plan filings required under this section.

Sec. 6. 35-A MRSA §3149 is enacted to read:

§3149. Coordination of integrated grid planning with transmission and energy planning

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Advanced conductor" means an electric conductor that has a direct current electrical resistance at least 10% lower than existing conductors of a similar diameter on the electric system.

B. "Grid-enhancing technology" has the same meaning as in section 3148, subsection 1, paragraph A.

2. Transmission and energy planning. In engaging in transmission and energy planning under this subchapter, the commission shall:

A. Establish mechanisms to integrate grid plans filed by large investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities pursuant to section 3147;

B. Seek to improve efficiency and reliability of and reduce congestion on the grid through the consideration of grid-enhancing technologies and advanced conductors in the distribution system and transmission planning processes; and

C. Incentivize the incorporation of low-voltage sensors to improve grid monitoring capacity, including data related to grid power quality, transformer status and distributed energy resource capacity by location.

Sec. 7. 35-A MRSA §3210-J, sub-§2, ¶F, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 321, §3, is amended to read:

F. In conducting a solicitation and selecting eligible Class IA resources or combined projects for contracts under this section, the commission shall:

(1) Consider the expected effect of eligible Class IA resources on other renewable resources, as defined in section 3210, subsection 2, paragraph C, due to congestion and curtailment;

(2) Select only those eligible Class IA resources or combined projects for contracts that will benefit ratepayers; ~~and~~

(3) Of those eligible Class IA resources or combined projects that benefit ratepayers, give preference to eligible Class IA resources or combined projects as follows:

(a) Primary preference to those eligible Class IA resources or combined projects that are located on contaminated land; and

(b) Secondary preference to those eligible Class IA resources or combined projects that minimize use of farmland that is not contaminated land and minimize use of forested land~~.~~; and

(4) Use grid plans developed by large investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities in accordance with the requirements set forth in section 3147, subsection 6.

Sec. 8. 35-A MRSA §3804, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 328, §1, is amended to read:

§3804. Commission advancement of clean energy and beneficial electrification

The commission shall advance through its decisions and orders beneficial electrification in order to achieve the emission reduction and renewable energy goals of the State, reduce energy costs to consumers and provide economic and climate benefits for all ratepayers. The commission shall seek to procure energy under section 3803, subsection 1, paragraph B in a manner that is consistent with beneficial electrification and in accordance with the requirements of section 3147, subsection 6. To the extent practicable, the commission shall seek to ensure that the acquisition of energy from renewable resources under section 3803, subsection 1, paragraph B is designed to procure sufficient energy to meet the portfolio requirements under section 3210 for the reasonably expected increase in use of electricity by retail electricity consumers.

Sec. 9. 35-A MRSA §10104, sub-§9-A is enacted to read:

9-A. Consistency in method. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, the trust shall seek to ensure consistency and accuracy in energy planning and analysis, including, but not limited to, through the use of an energy forecasting method for energy supply and demand forecasting that is consistent with the energy forecasting method used by the Governor's Energy Office in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan under Title 2, section 9, subsection 3, paragraph C.

Sec. 10. Assessment of nonwires alternative process. In consultation with the Efficiency Maine Trust and the Office of the Public Advocate, the Public Utilities Commission shall conduct a review of the nonwires alternative investigation and recommendation process established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3132-C. The commission's review must assess the efficiency of that process and consider how that process is incorporated into integrated grid plan filings submitted by large investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities in accordance with the requirements established by Title 35-A, section 3147. The review must include the opportunity for stakeholders to provide comments to the commission. The commission shall develop recommendations for changes to the nonwires alternative investigation and recommendation process based on its review, which may include recommended legislation to better integrate nonwires alternatives into the requirements for grid plan filings. By January 1, 2026, the commission shall provide a report of its recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. The committee may report out a bill related to the commission's recommendations to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission and the Efficiency Maine Trust to use an energy forecasting method for energy supply and demand forecasting that is consistent with the energy forecasting method used by the Governor's Energy Office in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan. It requires the commission, in developing requests for proposals, conducting procurements and negotiating agreements for energy and energy storage systems, to consider the grid plans developed by large investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to seek to optimize grid capacity and minimize the need for capital investment in the transmission or distribution system.

It also requires the commission to, when engaging in transmission and energy planning, establish mechanisms to integrate grid plans filed by large investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities, seek to improve efficiency and reliability of and reduce congestion on the grid through the consideration of grid-enhancing technologies and advanced conductors and incentivize the incorporation of low-voltage sensors to improve grid monitoring capacity. The bill also requires the commission, in consultation with the Efficiency Maine Trust and the Office of the Public Advocate, to conduct a review of the nonwires alternative investigation and recommendation process established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3132-C. By January 1, 2026, the commission must provide a report of its recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. The committee may report out a bill related to the commission's recommendations to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.