L.D. 1726

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ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

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STATE OF MAINE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

132ND LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT " " to H.P. 1153, L.D. 1726, "An Act to Enhance the Coordination and Effectiveness of Integrated Distribution Grid Planning"

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and inserting the following:

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

D-1. When possible, seek to ensure consistency 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 methodology 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. "Advanced conductor" means an electrical conductor that has a direct current electrical resistance at least 10% lower than existing conductors of a similar diameter on the electric system.

Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§1, ¶B-1 is enacted to read:

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

Sec. 4. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§4, ¶D, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 702, §8, is amended to read:

D. Include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Forecasts of projected load, including forecasts of end-use electrification, energy efficiency and distributed energy resources and, when appropriate, consideration of the energy forecasting method used to prepare the comprehensive state energy plan required pursuant to Title 2, section 9, subsection 3, paragraph C;

(2) Baseline energy supply data and assessments, including but not limited to planned generation retirements; new generation that is planned or needed, including generation of electricity from renewable sources; and energy storage installations;

(3) Analysis of hosting capacity, including locational benefits of distributed energy resources and areas of existing or potential system congestion;

(4) Analysis of available and emerging technologies necessary to enable load management and flexibility and those technologies necessary to improve efficiency and reliability of and reduce congestion of the grid, including, but not limited to, the use of advanced conductors and grid-enhancing technologies, taking into consideration the commission's review pursuant to section 3148;

(5) An assessment of the environmental, equity and environmental justice impacts of grid plans; ~~and~~

(6) An identification of cost-effective near-term grid investments and operations needed to achieve the priorities identified in subsection 2; and

(7) Consideration of the use 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; and

Sec. 5. 35-A MRSA §3147, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 702, §8, is amended by amending the first blocked paragraph to read:

The commission shall make the filing for each covered utility available for public comment for a period of no less than 60 days. The commission may order a covered utility to revise the filing to address any deficiencies. The commission may use the filing and the input received from interested parties in rate cases or other proceedings involving the covered utility. In a competitive solicitation conducted by the commission, the commission may use the filings submitted pursuant to this subsection to develop requests for proposals, evaluate bids and negotiate agreements in order to optimize grid capacity.

Sec. 6. 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 March 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 report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Sec. 7. Flexible interconnection; evaluation; reports. The Public Utilities Commission shall explore and evaluate the feasibility of adopting emerging flexible

interconnection options in order to use distributed energy resources, increase grid capacity, decrease grid instability and reduce costs in achieving state goals related to clean energy, including energy storage and beneficial electrification. In exploring and evaluating flexible interconnection options, the commission shall:

1. Review potential practices for providing flexible interconnection options;

2. Engage with stakeholders, including members of the interconnection working group established pursuant to Public Law 2023, chapter 307, section 8;

3. Identify any barriers to adopting flexible interconnection options;

4. Identify ways in which customers seeking connection might benefit from flexible interconnection processes; and

5. Determine whether the costs of flexible interconnection may affect noninterconnecting customers and how that may be mitigated.

By February 15, 2026, the commission shall submit an initial report summarizing the commission's activities under this section to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. After reviewing the initial report, the committee may report out a bill relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature. By February 15, 2027, the commission shall submit a final report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utility matters that includes the commission's evaluation of flexible interconnection options, along with any recommendations. After reviewing the final report, the committee may report out a bill related to the report to the 133rd Legislature in 2027.

Sec. 8. Effective date. Those sections of this Act that enact the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3147, subsection 1, paragraphs A-1 and B-1 and that amend Title 35-A, section 3147, subsection 4 take effect February 1, 2026.'

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill. It does the following.

1. It requires the Governor's Energy Office to seek to ensure consistency in energy planning and analysis, including through the use of an energy forecasting method consistent with the method used by the office in preparing the comprehensive state energy plan.

2. It requires grid plans filed by certain transmission and distribution utilities to, when appropriate, consider the energy forecasting method used to prepare the comprehensive state energy plan. It also specifies that available and emerging technologies, which must be analyzed in the grid plan filing, include the use of advanced conductors and grid-enhancing technologies, and the amendment defines these terms. The amendment also requires that utility grid plan filings include consideration of the use of low-voltage sensors to improve grid monitoring capacity. These changes to the grid plan filing requirements take effect February 1, 2026.

3. It allows the Public Utilities Commission, in a competitive solicitation, to use grid plan filings to develop requests for proposals, evaluate bids and negotiate agreements in order to optimize grid capacity.

4. It 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 March 1, 2026, the commission must provide a report of its recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.

5. It requires the commission to explore and evaluate the feasibility of adopting emerging flexible interconnection options in order to use distributed energy resources, increase grid capacity, decrease grid instability and reduce costs. By February 15, 2026, the commission must submit an initial report summarizing the commission's activities and, by February 15, 2027, the commission must submit a final report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utility matters.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)