An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine

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

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §3210-H is enacted to read:

§3210-H. Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program

1. Program established. The Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established to remove obstacles to the use of and to promote development of the substantial renewable energy resources in northern Maine.

A. The commission shall administer the program in accordance with this section and shall ensure that it accounts for the program and its purposes in:

(1) Achieving the State's renewable energy goals and administering the renewable energy portfolio requirements pursuant to section 3210;

(2) Promoting the development of efficient biomass energy generation to diversify the State's forest economy and to prudently dispose of wood waste pursuant to the requirements of chapter 33;

While I would completely agree that the disposal of all the downed trees that are visible everywhere you look, it will take an army of employees using thousands of gallons of fuel to A) cut up the downed trees and then B) drag them out of the forest to transport them C) on diesel powered trucks to a facility that runs on fossil fueled electricity where D) the trees will be ground up and burned for fuel value. A Congressional study done many years ago found that all biomass plants were ineffective and produced volumes of GHG beyond what a fossil fuel plant burning natural gas emits. The only clear value here is the removal of dead trees as opposed to clear cutting forests and decimating the soils. While altruistic in motive, in reality this is a loosing situation and even if turned over to private industry as opposed to highly ineffective government run operations, probably will never even break even let alone make a profit. Another convoluted idea based upon unsound ideas exposed by politicians with no real understanding of the environmental problems and issues. This type of ‘feel good” stewardship will become some pet project that sucks mountains of money from the state treasury that has already been depleted by the levels of incompetence exhibited by the current administration.

(3) Achieving the State's wind energy generation goals and encouraging the development of wind energy generation facilities in the State in accordance with the Maine Wind Energy Act and chapter 34-A; and

Even Warren Buffet, a billionaire with no clear understanding of environmental issues surrounding wind energy announced without hesitation that wind energy has never previously and cannot in the future make any sense without substantial subsidies and tax breaks. Even then the USEPA has calculated that if a wind turbine were to run efficiently for 100 years it could not generate more than

20% of the energy that it took to built it, install it and maintain it. In fact, wind is such a losing concept that even bloated congressional members are questioning the concept of continuing subsidies for something as expensive, environmentally damaging, and costly to maintain as wind energy and yet we have sponsors in the Maine legislature pushing for wind energy in spite of having the knowledge that it is anything but reliable and effective.

A quote from another source: Sure, health concerns matter. Wildlife impacts matter. And aesthetics matter. But our message is also economic. Here's the fact the industrial wind developers want to keep from you: ***Mountain-based wind turbines in Maine do not make economic or environmental sense***. Why not? Because the costs and impacts of building industrial wind plants on Maine's mountaintops far outweigh the tiny benefits.

Here are 20 Facts *Every* Mainer Should Know

1. Wind-generated electricity will not "get us off of oil." 99% of Maine electricity generation is from clean sources other than oil and coal. We use oil for transportation and heating.
2. There is no shortage of electricity. Maine has 4400 megawatts (MW) of electricity generation capacity, though we rarely use even 1500 MW. The grid operator forecasts flat growth in demand for the next decade. No urgent need exists to sacrifice unique resources at taxpayer and ratepayer expense to produce a tiny amount of low-quality surplus electricity. New England could retire its few remaining oil and coal plants in the next decade, but those generators produce base load or peak load power, something wind-generated electricity cannot do.
3. Maine is already the 3rd cleanest state in the nation for CO2 emissions from electricity generation, even without a massive buildup of wind turbines. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Maine ranks first in non-hydro renewable electricity generation per capita, per gross state product and as a percentage of total electricity generation. Maine has by far the highest renewable portfolio standard in the U.S. Transportation is responsible for more than five times as much CO2 as Electricity generation, which accounts for only 8% of Maine CO2 emissions, 1.4% of New England CO2 emissions, and 4/10,000ths of 1% of USA CO2 emissions.
4. Unlike most generation sources, wind has a fatal flaw: it is both intermittent and unpredictable. By necessity, conventional firm capacity generators: nuclear, biomass, natural gas, hydropower, etc. will remain the primary suppliers of electricity to the New England grid well into the future. Wind-generated

electricity cannot, by its nature, replace or displace these “base load” or “peak load” generators. Its inferiority restricts wind to a role as a marginal supplier of electricity.

5. The Maine Legislature’s 2,700 MW goal for land-based wind generating capacity will require the construction of as many as 1,500 wind turbines, as tall as Boston skyscrapers, spaced a quarter mile apart on up to 300 miles of rural Maine’s mountains and hills. That turbine buildout would ruin the vistas of and from nearly every Maine mountain.
6. Too much to spend, too little to gain. The poor quality of Maine’s wind resource gives wind-generated electricity an effective output around 25% of its nameplate capacity, or only 675 MW of the 2,700 MW goal. On New England’s 34,000 MW grid, 675 MW is a drop in the bucket – especially when considering the hundreds of miles of costly turbines and transmission lines needed to achieve the goal. The expansive industrialization of rural Maine with up to 1500 massive wind turbines would be environmentally devastating, while the optimistic 675 MW would be less than 5% additional electricity (often produced when it isn’t needed) to the New England grid. It would have no noticeable impact on New England’s fossil fuel consumption.
7. Wind-generated electricity is high impact and low benefit. The entirety of Maine’s 2,700 MW goal could be supplanted by the construction and operation of A SINGLE, moderately sized, high-quality conventional generator, at 85% less cost.
8. Wind turbines on Maine’s mountaintops will not enhance our energy security. Virtually all of the electricity generation sources in New England are from North America. ALL are readily available in North America.
9. Wind will not get us off of coal. Placing wind plants on Maine’s mountains will not reduce coal consumption or stop mountaintop removal mining. Coal is used in other parts of the country as a reliable (albeit dirty) base load fuel, with some states deriving up to 75% of their electricity from coal. Wind power cannot generate base load power, so it cannot replace coal plants. Coal now generates less than 2% of New England electricity, and it is increasingly being replaced by much cleaner natural gas.
10. Placing wind turbines on Maine’s mountains will not improve Maine’s air quality. Because wind-generated electricity cannot replace (and can barely even displace) conventional generation, it does not reduce emissions. Moreover, EPA figures show that the burning of fossil fuels in Maine is a minor source of the state’s particulate pollution. Most fossil fuel pollutants blow into Maine from other regions of the country.

11. If CO2 is a problem, wind-generated electricity is not its solution. Placing wind plants on Maine's mountains will have no impact on climate change. Using the wind industry's own claims, 2700 MW of installed wind capacity in Maine could in the best-case theoretical conditions only reduce total U.S. CO2 emissions by less than four-one-hundredths of one percent (0.04%.) Globally, there would be no measurable impact. Wind plants require sources of NEW conventional generating capacity. The 2010 New England Wind Integration Study stated that, "Wind's intermittent nature would require increased reserves, ensuring that there are other generation options when the wind isn't blowing."
12. Wind-generated electricity's grid acceptance will require an unprecedented expansion of transmission capacity. The president and chief executive of ISO-New England said in 2010 that large scale deployment of wind-generated electricity "would require spending $19 billion to $25 billion for new transmission lines." These billions are charged to New England electric bills, needlessly bleeding our economy of critical disposable income.
13. Wind-generated electricity will not guarantee lower electricity rates. Wind industry officials often state that they cannot compete with low natural gas prices, which are forecast to remain low and stable for decades. The wind industry's insistence on a federal Renewable Energy Standard and continued tax credits are proof that wind-generated electricity cannot compete with other sources.
14. Without government mandates wind-generated electricity is not viable. It is said that "wind should be a part of the mix" in an "all of the above" electricity procurement strategy. First, wind's "part" would be insignificant. Second, "all of the above" is an unsustainable practice and should be amended to "all of the viable." What purchaser of anything (medicine, groceries, appliances…) can sustain an "all of the above" procurement approach?
15. Demand for wind-generated electricity is created by government policy, not by demand. Without favoritism from government policies that force ratepayers to pay the bill, the wind industry could not survive.
16. Wind is the most heavily subsidized by taxpayers. Through various federal programs, wind-generated electricity is subsidized, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, at a rate of $56.29 per megawatt hour (MWh). Compare this to other subsidized sources like natural gas and coal, which receive 64 cents/MWh, Hydro: 82 cents, Nuclear: $3.14, and Geothermal: $12.85/MWh. In 2010 the $5 Billion in federal subsidies for wind-generated electricity was more than TRIPLE the amount that went to natural gas-generated electricity and coal-generated electricity COMBINED. Note that in the same year natural gas and coal produced THIRTY times more electricity than wind: 69% of all-American electricity, while wind produced a mere 2%.

17. Wind plants create very few permanent jobs. Despite boasts of creating Maine jobs, wind plants produce mostly temporary construction jobs lasting fewer than six months. Wind projects certainly SPEND much, but they do not INVEST in jobs. Construction jobs are always welcome, but publicly-funded construction jobs should not simply "make work." They should produce necessary and useful assets like roads, bridges, and critical infrastructure whose benefits exceed their impacts. Also, state mandates to purchase higher priced wind-generated electricity could lead to LOST jobs and fewer available jobs in Maine; for every $100 million worth disposable income that is extracted from Maine's economy to buy unnecessary and ineffective wind infrastructure, Maine loses the equivalent income of 3700 jobs.
18. Most of a wind plant's expenditures occur outside of Maine – primarily, overseas. Property values of most new wind developments in Maine are sheltered from property tax increases by tax increment financing (TIF), leaving Mainers to pay a sizable share of the wind developers' taxes.
19. Health issues result from every existing wind-generated electricity plant. EVERY operating wind plant in Maine that has been sited near people has significant unresolved disputes over noise and shadow flicker.
20. Maine's "Quality of Place" will be undermined. The 2006 Brookings Institute Report "Charting Maine's Future" warned us to avoid sprawl in order to protect our "quality of place." Maine's wind development policy actually encourages rural sprawl, threatening Maine's distinctively unique character and future prosperity.
21. It should be mandatory for every representative in the Maine legislation to read, before talking their oath, Adam Smith's treatise "Wealth of Nations" in order to understand the law of supply and demand before they feel the urge to propose legislation that they "think will benefit the environment" without having a clear understanding the economics as well as the environmental impact of their actions. There are alternatives that should be explored before some "feel good" piece of legislation is enacted that has long lasting effects on taxpayers with virtually zero return on investment made by law.

(4) Achieving the State's solar energy generation goals and encouraging the development of solar energy generation facilities in the State in accordance with the Maine Solar Energy Act.

A comparable issue with solar – inefficient and completely unreliable but yet another pet project for the "feel good" legislators to discuss with their constituents who don't have a clue of the true environmental impacts of manufacturing solar panels. Similar to wind, without subsidies these boondoggle monstrosities would never see the light of day. Politicians want to continue to throw

taxpayer dollars at projects that have less than breakeven returns at best and not one single legislator has even begun to look at the issues surrounding recycling of solar panels since there is no facility anywhere within 1,000 miles that has the capabilities to recycle these rare earth containing sheets of glass and non-recyclable plastic. We are looking at continuing this mind-numbing exercise of throwing away good taxpayer dollars after devices that cannot ever recoup the cost to build and install them even with peer reviewed journal articles that clearly demonstrate that solar is a losing proposition.

B. The commission shall ensure that, when applicable, its administration of the program accounts for and is designed to:

(1) Support the State's achievement of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions levels in Title 38, section 576-A;

The good state of Maine has a conceptual idea that it is a requirement to lower GHG emissions and yet there is no clearly defined source to point the finger at for that “AH HA!” moment. The fact that we have wood burning stoves hasn’t been discussed and for good reason; we need them to stay worm. If there were major industry emitting all sorts of toxic air contamination, we could point the finger at them and protest in the streets to close the facility, but there isn’t any. Further research would clearly show that there is a complete misunderstanding of photosynthesis [taught in sixth grade] since the carbon dioxide that is the primary ingredient in the GHG emissions is a requirement of all green plants to produce the oxygen we breath. Even the federal EPA reports reflect Maine’s air quality as better than average and the economic impact of attempting to enact legislation to curb GHG emissions that don’t actually exist is preposterous and once again, a complete and udder waste of taxpayer dollars. Those dollars could be spent on more important things such as new roads rather than pothole repairs that only last a few weeks. Why doesn’t the state hire a qualified air specialist such as Minnich & Scotto out of Freehold, NJ who specialize in GHG emission monitoring and recommendations? Secondly the existing landfills that are emitting GHG could be tapped, and the gas collected for use in small scale electrical generation thereby utilizing the methane generated by the decomposition of garbage instead of letting it just evaporate into the atmosphere. New York City does just that at the Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island and we could do that for pennies on the dollar to use the methane for electricity production. The legislature to date has shown a complete disregard for common sense continues down a pathway lined by the “Green New Deal” that has no place in reality. If this pathway is continued, you will legislate everyone out of business and out of this state unless that is the cause. A realistic understanding from someone with 30+ years of environmental

engineering having a realistic instead of altruistic look at the proposed legislation would shed light on what the feasibility is for change if change is in fact even warranted.

(2) Support the strategies and measures included in the State's climate action plan as adopted and updated pursuant to Title 38, section 577;

Opinion polls conducted over the past two decades show climate change consistently at or near the bottom of the public's list of concerns. For instance, a United Nations poll surveying more than seven million respondents from 195 countries asked participants to rank their top 16 policy priorities. Quality education ranked first, and "Action Taken on Climate Change" ranked dead last, receiving 300,000 fewer votes than "Access to Telephone and Internet," which finished 15th on the list.

This fact is making climate alarmists—those peddling the delusion that human-caused climate change is destroying the Earth—increasingly desperate. It seems to be having the same effect on members of the compliant mainstream media, who have jettisoned all pretense of objectivity and the search for the truth about the causes and consequences of climate change. News outlets are increasingly bowing to the demands of progressive radical environmentalists to refer not to global warming or climate change but instead to a "climate crisis" or a "climate emergency."

Global warming and climate change can be objectively measured and assembled into unbiased datasets, though this has not always been done. "Climate crisis" and "climate emergency," by contrast, are phrases with no scientific meaning, because they are normative, not descriptive. Any change from some idealized past state of the climate can be labelled a "crisis" or "emergency." People or governments may or may not need to worry about a changing climate or a warming globe, but it's all hands-on deck during an "emergency" or "crisis." Anyone pulling in a different direction or dissenting during a climate crisis is flirting with global disaster and must be suppressed.

A funny thing happened on the way to the climate stampede, however. Public opinion surveys show most people still refuse to enter climate emergency mode. Polls show even those people who think there is a climate apocalypse on the way are willing to pay astonishingly little to prevent it. This fact may limit the range of climate policies politicians can impose without risk of being turned out of office in the next election.

Despite a barrage of dozens if not hundreds of stories in print, online, on the radio, and on television daily, the number of people who believe humans are primarily responsible for climate change has changed little over time.

For more than a decade, public opinion surveys have consistently shown only a slight majority of those surveyed are "moderately," "very," or "extremely" certain humans are causing climate change. For instance, in a 2019 survey of 1,000 likely voters conducted by the respected polling service Rasmussen for The Heartland Institute, 48 percent of those polled said they believed human activities are primarily responsible for climate change. By contrast, 38 percent said they believed "long-term planetary trends" are primarily responsible for climate change, with 14 percent unsure. Two years of rabid propagandizing later, a new Rassmussen/Heartland survey of 2,000 likely voters finds the number of people who believe climate change is caused primarily by human activity grew by 7 percent, but so did the number of people who believe climate change is primarily caused by long-term planetary trends. Skepticism is growing even as climate crisis mode kicks in.

Another recent survey of 1,000 voters, conducted by MWR strategies on behalf of the American Energy Alliance, found 13 percent of those surveyed did not believe global warming was a problem at all, 14 percent thought it was a minor problem, and 23 percent thought it a moderate problem. Only 24 percent of those surveyed thought global warming constitutes a "crisis."

Also remarkably consistent over time is the fact that people are unwilling to spend very much to prevent climate change, even if they think it is a crisis.

In a 2019 Washington Post/Kaiser Family survey, 60 percent of respondents said they believed the world had fewer than 10 years to prevent the worst effects of climate change, with a majority saying the world has two years or fewer to act.

Even so, 51 percent of those surveyed would be "somewhat" or "strongly" opposed to paying a $2 monthly tax on their residential electric bills to fight climate change. Similarly, 61 percent would reject a 10 cents per gallon increase in the gasoline tax to fight climate change.

The numbers opposed to electric bill fees and gas tax hikes rose sharply when the proposed fees were increased: 71 percent oppose a $10 monthly tax on U.S. residential electric bills, and 74 percent oppose increasing the gas tax by 25 cents per gallon. These relatively modest cost increases are far less than what the Biden administration's climate change efforts will cost.

In the 2019 Heartland/Rasmussen survey, 63 percent said they believed it was very or somewhat likely climate change "will be catastrophic for humans, plants, and animals," but only 34 percent of those who believe climate change is caused primarily by humans said the federal or state governments should limit air travel to help prevent it, and just 24 percent said governments should require people to limit their consumption of meat to fight climate change.

The more recent MWR survey produced similar results. While 47 percent of participants said they believed global warming was a "major challenge or problem" (23 percent) or a "crisis" (24 percent), and another 37 percent thought it was either a "moderate" problem (23 percent) or a "small problem" (14) percent—meaning 84 percent of those surveyed think global warming is a problem to a greater or lesser degree—people are still unwilling to give up much freedom or dollars to fight climate change.

The MWR poll found 80 percent of those surveyed do not believe the federal government should mandate the kind of cars people can buy, and 61 percent even rejected the idea that government should subsidize electric car purchases. Thirty-eight percent of those surveyed—almost triple the number of people who said climate change was not a problem at all—said they would be unwilling to spend even a single dollar to "achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2035," and another 42 percent said they would be unwilling to spend more than $10 or less annually to achieve that result.

Addressing global warming directly, 37 percent of those surveyed by MWR said the amount of money they would be willing to spend "each year to address global warming" was zero, and another 44 percent said they would only be willing to spend less than $10 annually on it. The fact that 81 percent of those surveyed would be unwilling to spend even a piddling $10 a year to fight global warming means many of those who say they believe climate change is a major challenge or a crisis are unwilling to put much effort into fighting it.

Despite a big push by the Biden administration, Democrats and RINOs in Congress, and even some oil companies to adopt a carbon dioxide tax, only 28 percent of those surveyed by MWR support the idea, and 62 percent reject it outright.

After years of fearmongering and attempted indoctrination, people aren't really that concerned about climate change when the rubber meets the road with action—or dollars in this case. This message should cause despair among the climate-alarm set, and politicians should heed it as they shape the nation's energy policies. Why are the legislators chasing these unicorns instead of really trying to get to the economic issues this state is facing after the draconian measures implemented in an attempt to control covid by locking down the economy and destroying this state's economy unlike Florida, Texas and several other states that are thriving in spite of having been through the same covid issues we were but handling in a rational way?

(3) Promote energy equity with particular consideration given to the economic circumstances and opportunities in the State's socially vulnerable counties and communities. For the purposes of this subparagraph, "socially vulnerable counties and communities" means those counties and communities in the State containing populations that are disproportionately burdened by existing social inequities or lack the capacity to withstand new or worsening burdens; and

(4) Encourage the rapid development of renewable resources in northern Maine to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the State and realize direct and near-term economic benefits in northern Maine.

2. Request for proposals; generation connection line. On or before November 1, 2021, the commission shall issue a request for proposals for the development and construction of a 345-kilovolt double circuit generation connection line, or, in the commission's discretion, a transmission line or lines of greater capacity, to connect renewable energy resources located in northern Maine and developed pursuant to subsection 3 with the electric grid operated by the New England independent system operator, referred to in this section as "the ISO-New England system."

A. The proposals must be required to cover a contract term of 20 years, except that the commission may, in its discretion, approve a contract term longer than 20 years, and must include provisions for the

construction, development and subsequent commercial operation of the line or lines described in this subsection.

B. The commission shall evaluate the proposals received based, at a minimum, on the following factors: cost, economic benefit to northern Maine, the qualifications of the bidder or bidders and the 3rd parties the bidder proposes to contract with, the long-term viability of each proposal and the anticipated contribution of each proposal toward the achievement by the State of its renewable energy goals described in subsection 1, paragraph A and the other goals and purposes described in subsection 1, paragraph B. The commission shall disqualify any proposal that, in the commission's determination, fails to demonstrate the bidder's financial capacity to successfully construct, develop and operate the line or lines described in this subsection and to ensure its interconnection with the ISO-New England system.

C. The commission shall give preference to proposals that, in the commission's determination, demonstrate the most cost-effective and efficient transmission access to renewable energy resources in northern Maine in a manner that best supports the achievement of the State's renewable energy goals under section 3210, the State's wind energy generation goals under the Maine Wind Energy Act, the State's solar energy generation goals under the Maine Solar Energy Act and the State's achievement of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions levels in Title 38, section 576-A. The commission shall also give preference to proposals favoring use of existing utility rights of way and other existing transmission corridors in the construction of the line or lines described in this subsection, wherever feasible.

D. The commission may consider and, in accordance with the applicable provisions of this subsection and subsection 3, select a proposal or proposals that include both the development and construction of the line or lines described in this subsection and the development and construction of one or more qualified renewable energy generation projects described in subsection 3.

E. No later than March 1, 2022, the commission shall direct one or more transmission and distribution utilities to enter into a contract or contracts with qualified 3rd parties pursuant to any proposal selected by the commission in accordance with this subsection, except that, if at the close of the competitive bidding process the commission determines that no proposal meets the requirements of this subsection, the commission may reopen a new competitive bidding process under this subsection.

3. Request for proposals; renewable energy generation projects. The commission shall issue a request for proposals for the development and construction of qualified renewable energy generation projects in northern Maine designed to connect to and transmit generated power using the line or lines to be constructed pursuant to subsection 2. The commission shall make every effort to ensure that the competitive bidding process directed by this subsection results in the selection of proposals for contracting pursuant to paragraph E no later than May 1, 2022. Except as provided in paragraph B, subparagraph (2), renewable energy generation projects on which construction commenced prior to September 30, 2021 are not qualified for the purposes of this subsection.

A. The proposals must be required to cover a contract term of 20 years, except that the commission may, in its discretion, approve a contract term longer than 20 years, and must include provisions for the construction, development and subsequent commercial operation of one or more qualified renewable energy generation projects in northern Maine that will be designed to connect to and transmit generated power using the line or lines to be constructed pursuant to subsection 2. The commission may consider only proposals for the construction of the following categories of qualified renewable energy generation projects: solar arrays and installations; wind power installations; geothermal installations; hydroelectric generation projects; battery energy storage systems; biomass generators fueled by wood or wood waste, by landfill gas or by anaerobic digestion of agricultural products, by-products or waste; and waste-to-energy generation facilities fueled by municipal solid waste.

B. The commission may, in its discretion, consider and select in accordance with the applicable requirements of this subsection:

(1) One or more contracts for capacity resources or renewable energy credits from a qualified renewable energy generation project described in this subsection, whether or not such contract also provides for the transmission of energy generated by that project; or

(2) One or more contracts for renewable energy generation projects on which construction commenced prior to September 30, 2021, if the commission determines that:

(a) Such a project otherwise meets the requirements of this subsection;

(b) Additional line capacity remains available on the line or lines to be constructed pursuant to subsection 2; and

(c) There are no commercially viable proposals remaining for consideration for qualified renewable energy generation projects on which construction commenced or will commence on or after September 30, 2021.

C. The commission shall evaluate the proposals received based, at a minimum, on the following factors: cost, economic benefit to northern Maine, the qualifications of the bidder or bidders and any 3rd parties the bidder proposes to contract with and, as determined by the commission, the short-term, medium-term and long-term viability of the proposal.

D. The commission shall give greatest preference to proposals that, in the commission's determination, demonstrate the most cost-effective and efficient development of renewable energy resources in northern Maine in a manner that best supports the achievement of the State's renewable energy goals under section 3210, the State's wind energy generation goals under the Maine Wind Energy Act, the State's solar energy generation goals under the Maine Solar Energy Act and the State's achievement of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions levels in Title 38, section 576-A.

E. The commission shall direct one or more investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to enter into a contract or contracts with qualified 3rd parties pursuant to any proposal selected by the commission in accordance with this subsection, except that the total generating capacity of the projects contracted by the commission pursuant to this subsection may not exceed the thermal limit of the line or lines to be constructed pursuant to subsection 2. If at the close of the competitive bidding process the commission determines that no proposal meets the requirements of this subsection or that additional line capacity remains available, the commission may reopen a new competitive bidding process under this subsection.

F. In selecting contracts pursuant to this subsection, the commission shall make every effort to ensure that at least one such contract supports the construction and development in northern Maine of a biomass generator fueled by wood or wood waste. In considering any proposal under this subsection for a qualified renewable energy generation project that is a biomass generator fueled by wood or wood waste, the commission shall consider the waste reduction benefits to the State’s forest products industry associated with the operation of the generator.

4. Regional electric grid integration and development. When authorized and as practicable, the commission, in implementing and administering the program under this section, and the Office of the Public Advocate shall:

A. Make every effort to facilitate the construction and development of the line or lines described in subsection 2, including, but not limited to, participating in any regional or federal proceeding relating to the line or lines; and

B. Participate in proceedings involving the inclusion or integration of the line or lines described in subsection 2 and any associated upgrades by the New England Power Pool as defined in section 4103, or its successor as approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the ISO-New England system into the ISO-New England system's transmission plan, bulk power system and pool transmission facilities, as that term is defined in the ISO-New England system's open access transmission tariff.

The commission, the Office of the Public Advocate and the Office of the Attorney General may, separately or in combination, obtain any technical or legal assistance necessary to ensure regional and federal interconnection and grid reliability standards are not employed directly or indirectly to discourage the development of the renewable energy resources in northern Maine under the program.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, to be administered by the Public Utilities Commission, with the purpose of removing obstacles to the use of and promoting development of the substantial renewable energy resources in northern Maine.

Under the program, the Public Utilities Commission is required to issue a request for proposals for the construction and development of a 345-kilovolt double circuit generation connection line, or transmission line or lines of greater capacity, in northern Maine to connect renewable energy resources in northern Maine with the ISO-New England system. The Public Utilities Commission is also required to issue a request for proposals for the construction and development of renewable energy generation projects in northern Maine that will be designed to connect to and transmit generated power using the line or lines. No later than March 1, 2022, the Public Utilities Commission is required to direct one or more transmission and distribution utilities to enter into contracts for the construction of the line or lines. The Public Utilities Commission is also required to direct one or more investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to enter into a contract or contracts for the construction and development of renewable energy generation projects with a total generating capacity that does not exceed the thermal limit of the line or lines.

In implementing and administering the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, the Public Utilities Commission is directed to make every effort to facilitate the construction and development of the line or lines including participating in any regional or federal proceeding relating to the line or lines and participating in proceedings involving the inclusion or integration of the line or lines and any associated upgrades by the ISO-New England system or the New England Power Pool into the ISO-New England system's transmission plan, bulk power system and pool transmission facilities.