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Barry J. Hobbins
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

May 18, 2021

Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate and I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 1710 “An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine.”

The OPA would like to thank President Jackson for submitting LD 1710. We sympathize with the citizens of Aroostook County. This is a complicated issue and the lack of access to the ISO-NE grid in the county creates many challenges, which is why the OPA was happy to be a part of the Northern Maine Transmission Stakeholder Group, which was led by the Governor’s Energy Office, pursuant to the passage of LD 1796 in the 129th Legislature. The purpose of the stakeholder group was to “identify and develop strategies to address the transmission grid reliability and electric rate stability for the northern Maine service territory.” Unfortunately, the working group met only three times last year due to limitations caused by the pandemic.

The OPA would ask that the committee review the report that is currently being drafted by the GEO before making any decision on this pending legislation and, if necessary, ask the working group to reconvene off-session to give this issue the consideration it deserves. If this discussion continues, the OPA would ask that any proposed transmission line not be a one-way street. There must be interconnection

“off ramps” to allow for the use of power generated in Aroostook County be accessible and utilized by the people of Aroostook County.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 1710, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barry J. Hobbins".

Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate