



Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters  
In Support of LD 1710  
*“An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the  
Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine”*  
Before the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee  
May 18, 2021

Good day Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is Beth Ahearn, the Director of Government Affairs for Maine Conservation Voters (MCV). MCV works to make conservation a political priority; to address climate change, transition to a clean energy economy, and build an inclusive democracy. MCV offers testimony in support of LD 1710. Thank you to President Jackson for sponsoring this legislation to build out clean energy and create economic opportunity for Northern Maine.

LD 1710 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.

Maine has ambitious clean energy goals: 80% clean energy by 2030 and 100% by 2050. These goals are discussed in Maine’s Climate Action Plan, [Maine Won't Wait](#). This legislation can help Maine realize clean energy goals with solar and wind while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Northern Maine has tremendous clean energy potential which would create much needed, good paying jobs. Building a connection or transmission line(s) is essential to unlocking that potential. And excitingly, we are living in a time when clean energy is cost competitive. The most recent example comes from September of 2020, when procurement pursuant to Maine’s updated Renewable Portfolio Standard (LD 1494)

resulted in 450 megawatts (MW) of new solar; new wind power; as well as existing hydropower and biomass for a total of 492 MWs. The average contract rate for the winning bidders of that 2020 procurement was 3.5 cents per kilowatt hour; on par with the price of natural gas, demonstrating that clean energy at a low price ***IS*** possible. This is encouraging, and necessary for us to transition away from dependence on fossil fuel.

In its testimony, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recommends several ways to improve LD 1710 with language related to transmission proposals in existing utility rights of way and transmission corridors; environmental siting criteria; renewable energy resource eligibility criteria; and coordination with other bills introduced, including LD 1350, “An Act To Expand Maine’s Clean Energy Economy.”

We urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1710. Thank you for your time.