



Glenn "Chip" Curry
Senator, District 11

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Chip Curry introducing
LD 2087, "An Act to Protect Property Owners by Preventing the Use of Eminent Domain to Build Transmission Lines Under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
January 23, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Distinguished Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Chip Curry. I am the State Senator for Senate District 11, which includes the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County.

Today, I am introducing LD 2087, "An Act to Protect Property Owners by Preventing the Use of Eminent Domain to Build Transmission Lines Under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program."

I support the intent to integrate Aroostook County into the New England energy grid and believe it is a bold step towards economic and environmental betterment. This transmission project is one part of our commitment to fostering renewable energy sources, reflecting our broader ambition to protect our environment and achieve energy independence.

The development of renewable energy infrastructure is a national priority, like the Moon Shot initiative or the building of Liberty ships to win WW2. However, historical precedents have shown that some infrastructure projects can disproportionately and negatively impact marginalized communities that lack political power. The routing of the Interstate Highway System through underprivileged neighborhoods serves as a stark example.

It's critical that we learn from these lessons. The concerns of my constituents, whose property sits in the path of the proposed transmission line, have revealed the lack of clear, fair, and well-defined guidelines governing the use of eminent domain, underscoring the urgency to establish stringent criteria and protections that respect property rights and community integrity.

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and members of the committee, I ask you to delay the scheduling of a work session to allow interested parties to come together to seek an amendment that when ultimately passed will require the PUC and any future developers to engage in a transparent and just siting process, that minimizes the impacts to property owners while also protecting the interests of rate-payers.



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Maine is a small state, and we have the ability to work through difficult issues. By bringing together organizations such as those focused on farm interests, rural communities, economic development, environment, individual rights, and energy independence, we can create a more just way in which we meet our state energy needs.

Thank you for your consideration, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chip Curry".

Chip Curry
State Senator, District 11

Representing the twenty-six rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County