

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Secure the Maine Electrical Grid from Long-term Blackouts

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

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §3144 is enacted to read:

§ 3144. Protection from geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses

The commission shall direct transmission and distribution utilities to take actions to ensure that their systems are protected from or able to negate effects of geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses.

All costs incurred by transmission and distribution utilities as a result of the requirement imposed under this section are just and reasonable for rate-making purposes. The costs of a failure of a transmission and distribution system resulting from geomagnetic disturbances or electromagnetic pulses are the responsibility of the transmission and distribution utility and may not be borne by ratepayers.

Sec. 2. Mitigation; geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses. In accordance with the Maine Revises Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3144, by July 1, 2016, the Public Utilities Commission shall direct transmission and distribution utilities to undertake mitigation measures to protect their systems from geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses as identified in the Public Utilities Commission report dated January 20, 2014, entitled Report to the Legislature Pursuant to Resolves 2013, Chapter 45, Regarding Geomagnetic Disturbances (GMD) and Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP), including but not limited to the installation of additional geomagnetically induced current monitoring sites, neutral current blocking devices, supervisory control and data acquisition system protectors and the holding of sufficient spare transformers on site to more quickly replace damaged transformers.

SUMMARY

This bill gives the Public Utilities Commission the authority to require transmission and distribution utilities to take necessary actions to ensure that their systems are protected from or able to negate effects of geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses. This bill provides that any costs incurred by a transmission and distribution utility as a result of a directive by the commission are just and reasonable for rate-making purposes; however, the costs of a failure of a transmission and distribution system resulting from geomagnetic disturbances or electromagnetic pulses are the responsibility of the transmission and distribution utility and may not be borne by ratepayers.

The bill also directs the Public Utilities Commission, by July 1, 2016, to direct transmission and distribution utilities to undertake mitigation measures, including but not limited to the installation of additional geomagnetically induced current monitoring sites, neutral current blocking devices and supervisory control and data acquisition system protectors and the holding of sufficient spare transformers on site to more quickly replace damaged transformers. Identified measures were included in the Public

Utilities Commission report dated January 20, 2014, entitled Report to the Legislature Pursuant to Resolves 2013, Chapter 45, Regarding Geomagnetic Disturbances (GMD) and Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP).