

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

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting the following:

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

§ 3144. Protection from geomagnetic disturbances

The commission shall direct transmission and distribution utilities to take all cost-effective actions to ensure that their systems are protected from or able to negate effects of severe geomagnetic disturbances. Any action directed by the commission must be at a minimum consistent with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's reliability standards.

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.

As part of its annual report submitted pursuant to section 120, the commission shall include a summary of actions taken under this section.

Sec. 2. Mitigation; geomagnetic disturbances. In accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3144, the Public Utilities Commission shall direct transmission and distribution utilities to, by December 31, 2020, install and operate equipment to protect and monitor their 345-kilovolt transformers against severe geomagnetic disturbances. The Public Utilities Commission shall collaborate with transmission and distribution utilities to determine a time frame in which the work is to be completed in order to meet the December 31, 2020 deadline.’

SUMMARY

This amendment is a minority report of the committee. It removes the directive to the Public Utilities Commission to order transmission and distribution utilities to undertake actions to ensure their systems are protected from or able to negate effects of electromagnetic pulses and limits the directive to severe geomagnetic disturbances only. The amendment specifies that any action directed by the commission must be cost-effective and at a minimum consistent with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's reliability standards. It removes language that prohibits a transmission and distribution utility from collecting from ratepayers costs to address the failure of the system due to geomagnetic disturbances or electromagnetic pulses.

The amendment changes the specific mitigation measures the bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to direct transmission and distribution utilities to undertake to protect their systems from geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses and instead requires that the commission order transmission and distribution utilities to install and operate equipment to protect and monitor their 345-kilovolt transformers and other critical equipment against severe geomagnetic disturbances. This amendment requires the work to protect the 345-kilovolt transformers be completed no later than December 31, 2020, but the time frame for that work is to be determined from a collaboration between the commission and transmission and distribution utilities.