



Testimony in Support of 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](#)”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 2087. My name is Jacob Posik and I am testifying in support of LD 2087 on behalf of Maine Policy Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to expand individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine.

Government use of eminent domain often comes at the detriment of vulnerable communities who do not have the political power to defend themselves against the seizure of their property. According to the Institute for Justice (IJ):

“Communities targeted by eminent domain for private development are much more likely to be communities of color, while residents are much more likely to live at or below the poverty line or have lower levels of income and education than surrounding neighborhoods, according to research by the Institute for Justice.”

Maine is home to some of the worst eminent domain laws in the country. Unfortunately, they are full of loopholes that allow the government broad authority to seize land from private citizens for private purposes. In the IJ’s 50-state analysis, Maine receives a grade of a D+, putting us among the 15 worst in the nation.

It is fundamentally wrong to seize property from private landowners and give it to private corporations for their benefit. Even if, in this case, the alleged public benefit is to reduce carbon emissions, the climate impacts of LS Power’s proposed energy project under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program are immeasurable and unquantifiable when compared to the real economic harm affected and abutting landowners will experience by the seizures and the value of their properties over time.

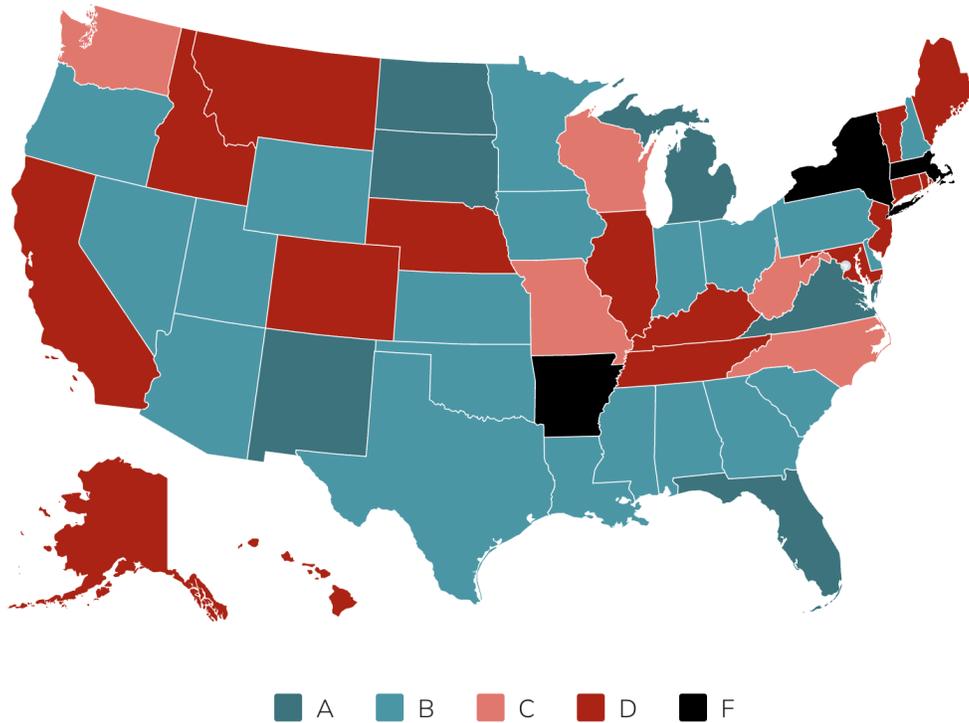
While Maine Policy strongly believes the State, in its quest to hurt ratepayers by electrifying and decarbonizing everything, should restrain from using eminent domain whatsoever in these endeavors, the Committee should, at a minimum, adopt the amendment proposed by the Office of Public Advocate¹ if it insists that eminent domain should be used during construction of the proposed transmission line.

¹ <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=180574>



To protect property rights and landowners within and abutting the proposed transmission line, we urge the Committee to vote **“Ought to Pass”** on LD 2087. Thank you for your consideration.

Grades for State Eminent Domain Laws



Source: Institute for Justice