

February 20, 2024

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***Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology***

***RE: LD 2205 "Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program"***

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, my name is Karen Blakelock and I am the Climate and Energy Policy Advisor for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to submit comments neither for nor against LD 2205 - Resolve, to Require the PUC to Initiate a Feasibility Study for the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. TNC has been leading conservation in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 300,000 acres.

As an organization committed to creating a future of healthy lands, waters, and communities, we know that well-sited renewable energy and transmission infrastructure is necessary to meet our state's climate goals. For this reason, we are working with Senator Curry to convene stakeholders to discuss a path forward on the Northern Maine Renewable Energy transmission line.

TNC appreciates that LD 2205 proposes to study the extent to which the transmission line would advance the clean energy goals of the state, as well as the ecological and environmental impacts, among other things. These are all important considerations; however, this bill proposes to delay the PUC from soliciting requests for proposal for this project until mid-2026.

There is work being done *now* to ensure that all stakeholders have their voices heard throughout the process. The concerns proposed to be studied in this bill, LD 2205, can be addressed on a timelier basis without resorting to a years long study contracted through an independent engineering firm. The expertise to evaluate the criteria proposed in the bill exists in various stakeholders across

the state, and by including a diverse set of voices in the process moving forward.

We urge this committee to consider whether LD 2205 is the best path forward at this time, with the knowledge that there is a process currently taking place to convene stakeholders and address the concerns outlined in this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.