



March 11, 2025

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair
The Hon. Melanie Sachs, Co-chair
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 596, “Resolve, To Provide Legislative Approval Of Northern Maine Transmission Infrastructure”

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Sachs, and members of the EUT Committee:

On behalf of Longroad Energy (Longroad), I am writing in support of L.D. 596, “Resolve, To Provide Legislative Approval Of Northern Maine Transmission Infrastructure,” sponsored by Senator Lawrence.

Longroad develops and operates solar and wind energy projects in markets across the United States. In our Scarborough office, we employ a dozen people including Maine Maritime Academy graduates and U.S. military veterans who operate hundreds of renewable energy power plants across the country from a control room staffed around-the-clock. The Longroad team has been developing renewable energy projects in Maine for nearly 20 years, and during that time, we have invested over a billion dollars in the process of developing approximately 860 megawatts (MW) of clean energy here in the state.

The Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued a request for proposals (RFP) in 2021 pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development statute that was developed by the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology during the 130th Legislature. Longroad’s King Pine Wind project was selected in the energy supply portion of that RFP process, but ultimately the Commission suspended the process and indicated an intent to initiate a new procurement.

King Pine Wind is a 1,000 MW wind project on commercial forestlands in and around Webbertown Township, west/northwest of Houlton. It is expected to generate enough electricity to meet the annual needs of the equivalent of 450,000 average households. King Pine will produce electricity at a cost below the market rate for power, and it will be the largest, cheapest source of new electricity – clean or otherwise – in New England. The approximately \$2 billion project will also provide significant economic benefits to northern Maine, including millions of dollars in property taxes and community benefits.

For decades, the renewable resources of northern Maine – originally, hydropower and biomass, now joined by wind and solar – have been held back by a lack of transmission capacity. In fact, most of Aroostook County is not directly tied into the U.S. electricity grid, instead relying on the Maritimes control area. Without a practical path to the ISO-New England system, investment that would go into energy resources in the County has gone elsewhere for many years. The intent of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program is to unlock opportunities for this part of the state through development of transmission.

If Maine hopes to reach its goals of cheaper and cleaner power, the energy resources of northern Maine must be utilized. The volatile cost of fossil fuels that set the wholesale electricity market in New England are a significant contributing factor to high power prices. Reducing reliance on these sources of power is necessary to sustainably lower the electricity price burden on Maine residents and businesses. Furthermore, a large renewable power resource like King Pine is needed to meet the state’s 2030 climate goal, according to the *Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment* released by the Governor’s Energy Office in 2021.

While we are supportive of legislative approval of transmission to be developed under the Northern Maine program, it may make sense to table L.D. 596 until the Commission has issued an RFP and selected a specific transmission proposal. The program basically remains in the starting blocks – almost four years since the law was passed – so it is important that the RFP process be re-started as soon as possible.

Finally, Longroad also appreciates that the sponsors of L.D. 810, “*An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines*,” have raised broader questions about the approval processes for transmission projects. Although we are not transmission developers, every generator and consumer of electricity in Maine has a stake in ensuring that the state is served by an efficient and cost-effective grid. This requires a regulatory review process that is neither dilatory nor duplicative.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,



Chad Allen
Director of Development
Longroad Energy Holdings, LLC