

March 12, 2025

Senator Lawrence
Representative Sachs
Distinguished Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sach and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Darryl Coombs, I am the Manager of Business Development and Woolwich-based Reed & Reed, a 97-year-old Maine 100% employee-owned construction firm. I am writing this letter to **support LD 810**, An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines.

Maine's regulatory environment has become increasingly difficult between additional permit requirements, restrictive months for some work activity and a process that delays approvals. The additional requirements related to high-impact transmission lines are a deterrent for attracting much needed investment in our infrastructure.

Numerous studies, reports and discussions have occurred on the growing demand for electric power and the investment requirements for our transmission and distribution system. Each new requirement, whether a rule, or law, increases the financial risk and enticement for investment in our state. Under the current law when the legislature directs an agency to procure transmission lines it also "expects" the project to gain an additional legislative approval. While it has been debated if that is necessary since the legislature made the original decision for procurement, the effect has been that developers and their investors want to ensure that approval is secured.

The risk is two-fold for developers, they first must decide that a project is both financially and politically viable. That produces an outcome that increases costs for consumers because the risk is higher. It also makes it difficult for industry to plan accordingly. Between securing the necessary consultants, obtaining permits and meeting with local and regional officials a developer outlay is enormous and completely dependent on a complex legislative process.

Transmission line construction is difficult in Maine and requires a certificate of public convenience and necessity by the Maine PUC. Removing the secondary approval does not eliminate public engagement, it simply provides a clear process in a procurement process that has already been authorized.

If Maine is serious about upgrading our capacity to meet demand, and delivering low-cost energy generated in our state to the market, this should be approved. We strongly encourage the Committee to vote in support of this bill.

Regards,



Darryl Coombs

Manager of Business Development

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