

Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
In Support of L.D. 810, An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines
March 11, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on L.D. 810, An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines. I am providing testimony in strong support of this legislation on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, which represents small to large businesses across the state.

This legislation seeks to revert the approval process for high-impact transmission projects to the system in place prior to the 2021 Question 1 referendum, which required a two-thirds vote of the legislature. Prior to the passage of Question 1, an established process allowed projects to proceed without added uncertainty. Previously, the Public Utilities Commission and other relevant state agencies would review a proposed project, based on a legal requirement, to see if it met the legal standard of review. Once the review was complete, awardees could move forward in attaining the necessary local, state, and federal permits required.

From the Chamber's perspective, this new requirement of a two-thirds legislative vote introduces uncertainty and the potential for delays in projects critical to Maine's economic growth and energy goals. Without the assurance that a project is approved to proceed, subject to required permits, there is greater unpredictability, which in turn can increase costs. These uncertainties can directly affect businesses, as timelines may shift, and additional financial resources may be required.

Infrastructure projects are vital to job creation and economic development, not just for transmission lines, but for transportation and housing too. These other forms of development do not face the same level of scrutiny and yet they are equally essential to Maine's economic success, both regionally and nationally.

L.D. 810 will remove a potential barrier in the middle of the approval process for high-impact transmission projects, bringing predictability and stability back to the regulatory framework.

Thank you for considering this important legislation – we urge you to support L.D. 810.