

Honorable Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Having practiced medicine in areas impacted by toxic emissions from fossil fuel, I am a strong proponent of renewable energy. However, I strongly oppose the amendment to LD 2174. From my unsophisticated reading of this bill, I am greatly concerned about the following aspects.

1. Home rule guaranteed by Maine's Constitution is blatantly negated.
2. Local knowledge and on the ground expertise on the part of municipalities, their committees and citizens will be ignored by this bill.
Having been on the Planning Board, Appeals Board and the Select Board for the Town of Sweden, much time, effort, discussion and fine tuning has been invested in ordinances. Such Home Rule efforts are especially crucial in local assessment of environmental issues such as promoting renewable energy, proper and protective development siting, protection of wildlife and water quality, and cultural /historical preservation. Such important efforts would have no merit in this bill.
3. In practical reality, this bill deceptively does far more than fast tracking evaluation of proposed development. The Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection in the recent past has told this Committee that the Department does not have the resources to evaluate and administer proposed tasks that are less demanding. With the short timelines of this bill and understaffing of the DEP, proper evaluation and administration likely won't occur. Thus, any default lack of determination provisions will become de facto approval but without the consideration of critical environmental impacts.

Renewable energy is vital. Unfortunately, this bill is taking a centralized and unfocused one size fits all approach that will harm the vital goal of advancing renewable energy.

Please vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bruce Taylor, MD
Sweden

