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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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**Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission**

**In Support of**

**LD 1963, An Act Regarding the Future of Renewable Energy Transmission in Northern Maine**

January 11, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology (Committee), my name is Deirdre Schneider, testifying in support of the sponsor's amendment to LD 1963, An Act Regarding the Future of Renewable Energy Transmission in Northern Maine on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

The Commission would like to thank President Jackson and his staff for working with the Commission on language to provide the Commission with the necessary flexibility to achieve the goals of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program in the most cost-effective manner.

The amendment makes the following three substantive changes to the existing law:

- It removes the requirement that the Commission issue a request for proposals for a 345-kilovolt double circuit generation connection line, and instead requires the request for proposals to be for the infrastructure necessary to connect up to the maximum number of megawatts permitted by ISO-NE of renewable energy resources located in northern Maine;
- It requires the Commission to collaborate with the Governor's Energy Office to seek other states or entities to partner with for the procurement of infrastructure and renewable energy generation projects; and
- It allows the Commission to develop a request for proposals and to evaluate proposals for both infrastructure and generation in coordination with other states or entities.

As the Commission has stated in previous testimony, providing the Commission with more discretion in these procurement processes may achieve better outcomes than having overly prescriptive directives that limit the options the Commission may consider. Limiting the Commission's flexibility may result in either the inability to procure the energy or infrastructure or the procurement of the energy or infrastructure at a higher cost to ratepayers.

The Commission would like to note that we have some concern with following language in section 2 of the amendment – "up to the maximum number of megawatts permitted by ISO-NE." We have conveyed our concerns to the Senate President and are confident that we can work together to find more workable language in advance of the work session on this bill.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.