

Good afternoon. My name is Greg Rossel. I'm a boat builder and I live in Troy. And I'm one of the thousands who received a letter from LS Power informing us that our land may be affected by their transmission project. That letter that was delivered in a plain envelope just before the long fourth of July weekend. Initially ours landed in the recycling bin - unopened.

I am here to voice several concerns with the proposed bill as it does not address the flaws in the previous bill and its process that has brought us here today

From the get go, after the litigation concerning the CMP hydro corridor, voters have made it quite clear that they wanted more oversight – not less when dealing with transmission projects with heavy environmental impact.

To begin, there is nothing to address the PUC's lack of transparency in negotiating the prior contract to placate bidders desire for confidentiality.

Consider that the public never knew what other contractors bid for the project. Nor was the public privy to what the LS Power bid was. We never were able to find out what was in the glowing report (that LS Power paid for) that the MPUC used to justify their selection of that company. The legislature was not provided with a map of the route or financials before being asked to vote of the corridor. That too, apparently was a secret commodity. A week later the map miraculously showed up in the letters to landowners. And if one consulted the PUC on-line posting of the project, one would find that a large part of it was redacted – opaque, blacked out like a CIA document.

At the end of the process, the commission found that LS Power was unreliable and could not build the project at the promised price. If the process was transparent. we would have known the routes and price that was proposed by other contractors and independent analysts could have determined if the corridor could actually be built at the offered quote. The voters in the town of Troy would not approve of a snow plowing contract negotiated under such conditions.

Returning to the vote by the legislature. It was shameful that they were asked to approve the route with no information with a promise of just trust us. This was clearly done to do an end run around the intent of the voters.

It's interesting that in the evaluation criteria in this bill (Economic development, rates, etc) there appears to be no mention of environmental impact. It seems that environmental degradation is an accepted cost of curbing environmental degradation. It is almost as though we have learned nothing from the arguments concerning the CMP Hydro corridor. Where is the statement that the new lines must, not just favor following existing corridors? That environmental studies must be done prior to developing the route? Why is the project based solely on pursuing the lowest possible bid? Currently there are similar projects being developed in New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. These projects prioritize using existing corridors and where not available, running the line underground along existing highway right of ways. It seems to make environmental and economic sense to those states – why is it impossible in the state of Maine?

So under the previous legislation, the Aroostook Renewable Gateway, like the CMP Kennebec corridor, has achieved limbo status and valuable time was wasted in pursuing secrecy and putting a thumb on the scale in favor of preferred contractor. The proposed changes have not made any improvement. Maine deserves better.