

Testimony on LD1963

Position: Neither for nor Against

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, esteemed members of the EUT committee, and Senator Jackson

My Name is Tom Bolen and I chair the Albion Transmission Line committee.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today regarding LD1963

I sincerely believe that everyone present here today wants to do what they perceive as right for Maine regarding clean energy and how it will add to and enhance Maine's Energy portfolio. However the approach proposed thru the furtherance of LD1963 as amended, is simply more of what was experienced leading up to the proposed LS Power, ARG (Aroostook Renewable Gateway) fiasco through the passage of LD924. A rush to implement transmission infrastructure to connect Northern Maine's proposed Wind and other Clean Energy resources regardless of harm to Rural Maine's environmental and socio-economic infrastructure. Paragraph 1A of LD1963 makes this abundantly clear by stating; "Encourage the ***rapid development*** of renewable resources in Northern Maine to achieve...." After years of ***non-partisan*** public outcry against this type of a sub-optimized, zero-sum game approach you would think our legislators would learn that; "Failure to plan is planning to fail", which will happen if this bill in its current form is moved forward. As of 1/9/2024 Representative Cyrway's bill, LR3013 calling for a 3rd party feasibility study to help Maine better understand a path forward using modern technology, existing right of ways and robust engineering methods for transmission infrastructure passed the Legislative council and is being moved through the Legislative process. Hopefully this bill will be passed into law. I ask that this bill, LD1963, be put on legislative hold until the study proposed in LR3013 is complete and legislators on both sides of the isle with the help of this committee and public input assess the right path for Maine based on the study findings. I further ask that the EUT committee work with the Governor's Energy office to move quickly through the RFP process and put in place the newly envisioned DSO (Distributed System Operator) which if done correctly will be the planning entity for these types of projects going into the future.

Simply "wishing it were so" to implement major Transmission projects such as what's envisioned for Northern Maine by passing legislation with no underpinning of solid grid planning is a recipe for failure and continued outcry and pushback from Mainers. This will happen! We've all seen over the past several years what failure looks like when Government acts too quickly and either minimizes planning based on sound engineering practices and minimizes the gathering of stake holder input or simply disregards all of it. Take for example the NECEC line and also the proposed LS Power ARG corridor. Let's not continue to embrace this senseless strategy but rather act smartly and wisely so we can see what success looks like. Put LD1963 on hold! Maine's energy future is at stake... DIRIGO!

Thank You,

Thomas E. Bolen

Albion Transmission Committee; Chair