

Testimony for LD 1963

I'm a resident of Albion, Maine and I'm testifying on LD1963 with the position of neither for nor against LD 1963.

I am listing out areas for improvement and considerations if the bill proceeds:

Here in Maine, we have rules. To hunt on someone's land, you need permission from a landowner. To recreate through snowmobile trails and ATV trails you need permission to create a trail system from landowners. If you want to plant corn or harvest hay from a neighboring field that you do not own, you need permission. To build any renewable energy project, you need permission from the landowner to put the project on their land. So why is the siting of a Transmission Line exempt from permission from a landowner?

Any new siting of a Transmission Line impacting a landowner should include permission from a landowner, and not utilize the threat of eminent domain. Landowners who operate businesses and rely on their land for their livelihoods could be negatively impacted or displaced. The bill doesn't address permission for a new Transmission Line, and I think it should.

I don't think we want to become a state where we directly take out critical aspects of people's businesses and livelihoods through legislation, like impacting land used for farming and food production. It's like creating legislation that tells Amazon suddenly that they can't have warehouses to operate their business for an extended period.

I would like the Committee and other lawmakers outside of the committee who will see this bill in the coming weeks to think through the implications of out-of-state developers and profit-driven businesses identifying potential new routes through the state when siting a new Transmission Line.

I haven't seen any Engineering Studies on how LD 1963 could be implemented. I haven't seen studies that examine our existing transmission infrastructure here in the state and how we could make upgrades to transport future electricity generation. I also haven't seen a study on whether we could utilize corridors that already exist like roads and highways and burying the lines. There should be studies completed prior to getting bids from profit-seeking companies. It should not be the other way around.

In the past six months, towns have enacted moratoriums, and they are aggressively working on all renewable energy ordinances which can have negative impacts for other businesses here in the state that have been working to implement renewable energy projects. Without consideration and correction for these areas that I've highlighted, this project could create more headwinds for renewable energy projects, this project's success and future projects that aim to reach Maine's climate goals and on the broader scale of mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Respectfully submitted,

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