



Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

January 11, 2024

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

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA), thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of the sponsor's amendment to LD 1963, *An Act Regarding the Future of Renewable Energy Transmission in Northern Maine*, shared with the Committee's interested parties list on January 9th.

MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry. MREA members are united in our support of Maine's clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals. We believe this legislation, as amended, will help achieve those goals by improving the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program ("Program"), a legislative initiative that MREA strongly supported.

LD 1963, as amended, makes two meaningful changes to the Program and associated requests for proposals (RFPs):

- 1) It compels the Maine Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to work collaboratively with the Governor's Energy Office to partner with other states or entities in developing the RFPs, evaluation of proposals, and procurement of transmission infrastructure and renewable energy generation projects. Working collaboratively with other states, as the Commission did with Massachusetts in the Program's original procurement, is key to an affordable result. MREA is pleased to see language that specifically compels such collaboration.
- 2) Strikes the requirement that the Commission issue a RFP for a 345 kilovolt double circuit generation connection lines (or lines) of greater capacity. Removing this requirement

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may generate more, diverse interest in the RFP. Increased competition will only benefit Maine ratepayers.

In addition to those positive critiques of the legislation, MREA offers to the following:

- The request that in its forthcoming RFP for the Program, the Commission seek to procure renewable energy resources that maximize the utilization of the capacity of the selected transmission line, as was contemplated by LD 1943, *An Act Regarding Future Energy Procurements for Renewable Energy Development in Northern Maine* and is now law. It is an efficient use of the Commission's resources to do this all at once and marches Maine more quickly toward the goals of the Program and Maine's clean energy goals.
- While MREA supports the removal of the "345 kilovolt double circuit generation connection line language", we have some concern that without specific legislative direction, the RFP may result in contracts for projects (both transmission and renewable energy resources) that do not "encourage rapid development of renewable resources" and "expeditiously meet [Maine's] renewable energy and climate goals" (See 35-A MRSA § 3210-I (A), (B)) - in other words, that are too small. This might be accomplished by setting a 1,200 megawatt floor for the award of renewable energy generation contracts. The consideration of such a statutory provision must be balanced against MREA's desire for the Commission to have flexibility.

As MREA testified in support of LD 1710, *An Act to Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources in Maine* before the 129th Maine Legislature, now is a great time to open up Northern Maine's renewal energy generation potential. We believe that LD 1963, as amended, will help reach that potential.

MREA respectfully urges the Committee to vote Ought to Pass As Amended on LD 1963.¹

Thank you,



Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
Executive Director

¹ The views expressed in this document are shared by MREA members. However, given the breadth and variety of MREA membership, we anticipate that some members may submit additional comments of their own.