



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

January 23, 2024

RE: LD 2087, An Act to Protect Property Owners by Preventing the Use of Eminent Domain to Build Transmission Lines Under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Zeigler, and Members of the EUT Committee:

My name is Francesca “Ches” Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon’s Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine’s wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony neither for nor against LD 2087, *An Act to Protect Property Owners by Preventing the Use of Eminent Domain to Build Transmission Lines Under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program*.

Climate change is the most significant threat to Maine’s wildlife and habitat. In order for Maine to meet our ambitious and necessary greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, we must significantly increase renewable energy development. New renewable energy generation at a scale necessary to meet those targets will require additional transmission capacity and development. Transmission is necessary – we need to move renewable energy from where it is generated to where it will be used.

As written, LD 2087 would prohibit the use of eminent domain in the development or construction of a generation connection line or transmission line under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program. All development projects, including renewable energy and transmission projects, have the potential to negatively impact wildlife and wildlife habitats and to have cumulative impacts across ecologically significant landscapes. Therefore, pursuing a thoughtful, inclusive, and balanced approach to transmission line development is imperative, taking into account both wildlife *and* human impacts. Building trust within communities that could be potentially impacted by transmission line development is just as important as advancing strategies to minimize the environmental impacts of new lines in our state.

We welcome opportunities to engage with the sponsor and stakeholders to help broaden the conversation beyond the goal of this bill. With due diligence, we can help minimize impacts to Maine's environment and communities while maximizing Maine's energy production potential. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francesca Gundrum', written in a cursive style.

Francesca "Ches" Gundrum | Policy Advocate