

January 23, 2024

Testimony in Support of 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

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology:

I am Nathan Gould from Winterport. I am submitting this testimony in support of 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."

The recent debacle with LS Power's unrealized attempt to construct a transmission line highlights the need to protect landowners and their right to their property. It is the essential function of government to protect the right to property, without such right a functioning and civilized society cannot persist.

I agree with this effort from my Senator to protect this right for the citizens of our county affected by the proposed transmission line. It is regrettable that a project with such a scope as the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program hadn't received more scrutiny to foresee this problem. This Committee is part of such due diligence, as is the rest of the Legislature. Further, this issue should have been addressed long before LD 924 came before this Committee last year, and if it had, the palliative bill before you today would be unnecessary. With how much controversy the New England Clean Energy Connect project garnered, the problem LD 2087 tackles should have been anticipated. This bill highlights a failure at multiple junctures.

You've heard that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I submit that adhering to our Constitution is an excellent defense against encroachments on those rights given to us by our Creator. Meeting the dramatic goals of a climate plan is not a valid excuse to forgo the responsibility of protecting the People of Maine's rights on land, offshore, in their pocketbook, or in their driveways.

I ask the Committee to vote Ought to Pass. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Nathan C Gould

Winterport