



STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission
Neither For Nor Against

LD 2205, Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program

February 20, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology (Committee), my name is Deirdre Schneider, testifying neither for nor against LD 2205, Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

LD 2205 requires the Commission to contract with an independent engineering firm to conduct a study concerning the feasibility of a 345-kilovolt or greater capacity electric transmission line designed pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program (Program) before the Commission issues a new request for proposals (RFP) under the Program.

While the Commission believes there may be some value in conducting this study the Commission has the following concerns:

1. The study is limited to a 345 kV or greater capacity line, but LD 1963, if enacted, would allow the Commission to consider alternatives to a 345 kV line;
2. The study requires the analysis of new infrastructure needed to connect to the proposed King Pine Wind project; however, when the Commission terminated the procurement of the transmission line under the Program it also terminated the procurement of the King Pine Wind project so it does not make sense to limit this analysis to a specific project that may or may not be part of a future procurement;
3. A lot of the elements of the study are duplicative of actions that would occur during the permitting process both at the Commission for a certificate of public necessity and convenience and at the Department of Environmental Protection;
4. There could be additional routes proposed in an RFP that were not routes that were studied by the Commission that could be just as viable and cost-effective;

5. Conducting this study on specific routes could decrease the competitiveness of a future RFP for both the transmission and generation required under the program; and
6. A study of this magnitude will be costly, and those costs will be borne by ratepayers.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.