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THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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**LD 197 “Resolve, to Direct the Governor's Energy Office to Conduct a Study Regarding the Future of Electric Transmission Infrastructure in the State.”**

**Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology**

Public Hearing

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and the esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

I am Senator Scott Cyrway, and I proudly represent Senate District 16 – Albion, Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville, and Winslow. I am before you to day to present the contents of LD 197, “Resolve, to Direct the Governor’s Energy Office to Conduct a Study Regarding the Future of Electric Transmission Infrastructure in the State.”

I am presenting this bill to you again this session because I think the work we did last session was important. This bill is the same as the amended version of LD 2205 from last session, which earned a unanimous ought to pass as amended from this committee in the 131<sup>st</sup> legislature, and it made its way to the Governor’s desk, where unfortunately it died in the Governor’s possession.

The study proposed would address the concerns that many of those in the path of the now terminated LS Power project raised. As we look at expanding transmission infrastructure in the State of Maine, we should consider options that resolve concerns around eminent domain and the well being of our natural beauty, which make transmission line projects unpopular.

As I said last year, The purpose of a feasibility study is simple – to explore the most effective ways to reach our energy goals while also preserving the natural beauty of Maine and the livelihood of its people. The LS Power project encountered significant opposition and scrutiny from our citizens, raising questions, about the true costs, the proposed route, and the environmental impact of the line.

This study will examine these critiques as well as potential solutions, like the use of underground transmission, and lines along railways, road ways, and other public right of ways.

During these debates, alternative projects and feasibility studies from other states were presented showcasing the use of underground transmission lines along existing highways and public lands. In states like Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, where time was taken to do these feasibility studies in advance, the willingness of their residents to support the projects has been much greater.

One additional point that should be raised is that the opposition of this transmission line was not specific to any political party. It is a bipartisan issue. When it comes to threatening someone's livelihood, it does not matter how they vote at the ballot box. With new projects in development, such as the 126-Megawatt Downeast Wind in Washington County, we cannot afford to overlook Maine's pristine topography, along with the future of our residents, when writing bills that support our energy plans.

The committee amendment last session allocated \$150,000 to conduct a feasibility study. This would allow us to find a well thought out strategy, backed by sound engineering principles, to guide projects to a point where they work for the people, not against them.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.