



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

March 11, 2025

RE: LD 810, An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines

Dear Chair Lawrence, Chair Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation nonprofit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine 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 in support of LD 810: *An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines*.

LD 810 will allow high-impact transmission lines to meet the majority legislative approval required by 35-A MRS §3132, 6-C (2023) if it is advanced by a state agency pursuant to a requirement of law or by a state agency with specific authority to do so. Maine Audubon believes that LD 810 would eliminate a duplicative process and increase efficiency in the process of implementing high-impact transmission lines.

Currently, in addition to obtaining all relevant permits, a high-impact electric transmission line may not be constructed anywhere in the State without first obtaining the approval of the Legislature. LD 810 would allow for exemptions to current statute that would streamline the approval process and strengthen the statute without compromising legislative will.

LD 1710 of the 130th Maine Legislature, which required the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to issue an RFP for a transmission line(s) and renewable energy generation projects in Northern Maine, is a prime example of a state agency following the requirement of a law that should meet the majority legislative requirements. The passage of LD 1710 was a demonstration of the will of the legislature to remove obstacles to the use of and to promote development of the substantial renewable energy resources in northern Maine.



Strong analysis of proposed high-impact transmission lines is critical to ensuring that a project does not negatively impact Maine people, wildlife, and our environment, and LD 810 would maintain these standards while eliminating duplication. Currently, in order to place a bid into a RFP that is directed by the Maine Legislature, a project must obtain a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) and a Site Location of Development (Site Law) permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In particular interest to Maine Audubon, a Site Law permit requires that projects have no adverse impact on the natural environment, meet standards of stormwater and wastewater management, and pose no threats to groundwater aquifers¹.

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. Maine Audubon believes that eliminating duplication in this process while still respecting the will of the legislature and meeting all necessary standards and environmental permitting is critical to achieving our renewable energy goals in an efficient and effective manner. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate

¹ 38 M.R.S. § 484(3) (2023).