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## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

### An Act Regarding the Approval of Transmission Lines

L.D. 810

GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE

March 11, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Caroline Colan, and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

The GEO testifies neither for nor against L.D. 810.

Modeling that informed the Maine Energy Plan demonstrates that to ensure an adequate supply of cost-effective clean energy, balance output from variable renewables, and meet growing load due to increased electrification, Maine will need to expand its transmission system in the years ahead. It can do so by bolstering capacity on existing transmission lines, utilizing grid enhancing technologies, and adding new lines to connect new resources. Utilizing a combination of these approaches will enable greater exchanges with neighboring states and regions and move more power across the grid, with the goal of increasing reliability and decreasing overall system costs.

ISO New England (ISO-NE), the independent regional grid operator, has long identified transmission system challenges in Maine including congestion at the Maine-New Hampshire interface up to the Surowiec Substation and significant interconnection limitations for northern Maine resources and a need for additional transmission capacity. Moving ahead with the procurement of transmission and generation under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program in the near term will be critical to meet Maine's energy goals, reduce volatility, and address system challenges and constraints, while delays in building out this infrastructure could result in insufficient capacity to serve demand for clean power, limited access to low-cost generation resources, delayed clean energy development, slowed customer adoption of electrified heating and transportation, and potentially even cause reliability problems.

Recognizing the critical need to advance transmission upgrades and construction in the state in a timely manner, GEO appreciates what we believe this bill is trying to achieve—clarity that a transmission line proposed by the state or proposed pursuant to Legislative direction, is assumed to have met the requirement for Legislative approval of a high-impact transmission line under Title 35-A, section 3132, subsection 6-C without additional legislation. If this is the intent of the legislation, we would like to ensure we understand the full range of circumstances and state agencies for which this proposed exemption applies, but also suggest that the Legislature reconsider this requirement for additional legislative approval altogether. This requirement adds significant and unnecessary financial risk to

transmission projects that is ultimately mitigated by the developer through increased bid costs borne by Maine ratepayers, and can contribute to delays with other costly implications.

Should this proposal move forward, GEO would like to work with the sponsor and the committee to reduce the barriers to developing responsible, timely and cost-effective transmission that aligns with the state's Energy Plan and is critical to improving system efficiency, resiliency and reliability of Maine's grid.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Colan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Caroline Colan, Legislative Liaison  
Governor's Energy Office