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132<sup>nd</sup> MAINE SENATE

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Augusta, ME 04333

**LD 1210, “An Act Regarding Renewable Electricity Generation by  
Hydropower Projects”  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
April 7, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: My name is Brad Farrin and I represent Senate District 3. I am here today to introduce LD 1210, “An Act Regarding Renewable Electricity Generation by Hydropower Projects.”

Maine has a rich history of harnessing the power of our rivers for energy. In fact, the power of our rivers operated many of our earliest mills. Our forefathers had the wisdom to tap this clean, reliable and abundant energy source in our state; and the earliest electricity generation took place in Oakland in 1899 when the first hydropower generator went online on the upper Kennebec River.

Fast forward to today and Maine is now facing a serious challenge. We are losing our hydropower projects at a time when we need them more than ever. In the last century since that first installation in Oakland, we have lost dozens of hydropower projects that jeopardize both the environment and our economy. Hydropower is a key piece of our renewable energy strategy and a critical part of our baseload infrastructure. We can't afford to lose it.

And it doesn't just affect us here in Maine. A few weeks ago, the Maine State Chamber held an energy summit where two generators, Serge Abergel from Hydro-Quebec and Dan Dolan from New England Power Generators, had a sobering message for those in the room. They said New England is headed toward a baseload crisis due to the loss of the natural gas fueled Mystic Generating Station, which had a nameplate capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

As we lose baseload capacity and increase demand through beneficial electrification, it's obvious where we're headed. That will be toward increased demand and higher prices along with brownouts and blackouts during peak periods when solar and wind cannot replace the lost baseload.

We also have to address another policy the Mills administration is seeking to implement that needs hydropower to achieve it. That is the reduction of the Renewable Portfolio Standard to 90 percent and the implementation of a 10 percent clean energy standard. Even she realizes that the limitations of solar and wind will only take us so far, and we will need hydro and even nuclear power to satisfy that new clean energy standard.



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This bill makes sure the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) takes into account the full benefits of hydropower – not just its environmental impact but also its role in our clean energy goals, decarbonization efforts and baseload power needs. It ensures that when the DEP reviews hydropower projects, they consider how these projects help us reduce emissions, create jobs, support Maine’s energy future and doesn’t lead to a loss in our baseload capacity.

At the same time, the bill recognizes the importance of balancing environmental concerns, like protecting wildlife and aquatic life. It simply ensures that we don’t lose sight of hydropower’s potential to help the state meet its clean energy and climate goals while still protecting the environment.

This bill is a commonsense approach to preserving and expanding hydropower in Maine. It supports our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, create jobs and keep our energy grid strong. I urge you to support it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.