



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

May 7, 2025

Re: Public Hearing, LD 1850, An Act to Improve Interagency Coordination on Renewable Energy Construction Projects

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support of LD 1850, *An Act to Improve Interagency Coordination on Renewable Energy Construction Projects*, on behalf of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA). MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry. Our member companies include wind, solar, hydropower, biomass, and tidal energy generators and developers of such projects, as well as companies that provide services to those producers, such as environmental engineers, electricians, and general contractors.

LD 1850 proposes that the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) create a database of renewable energy projects in the state, as well as an annual report summarizing trends identified in the database. MREA supports this legislation because a consistently produced, regularly updated, and publicly available database could positively inform decisionmaking and policy development related to renewable energy.

Of particular interest to MREA is "geospatial data of the project's footprint or outermost boundary" and "a description of the purposes for which the land on which the project is located was used prior to the development of the project". The total footprint of renewable energy projects in the state and the "type" of land (i.e., farmland, contaminated land, forestland, etc.) converted for the purposes of renewable energy development is largely unknown and, as a result, policy decisions on the topic can be subjective. This database would aid data-driven policy decisions.

To best achieve the narrow goal of understanding project footprint and former land use, we recommend that the database include existing projects, at least as far back as 2019 when renewable energy development in Maine increased. We recommend that this effort happen in collaboration with a project sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and

[www.renewablemaine.org](http://www.renewablemaine.org)

Forestry and funded in part by the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund that seeks to “develop and test a methodology to inventory built solar energy facilities in Maine” for the purpose of providing “information about location, extent, and land use changes associated with solar.”

Finally, with regard to land use data, we recommend that instead of a “description” of the former land use that there be a consistently used list of land use types from which to select, in order to more easily assess trends.

We also recommend that GEO collaborate with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on a current or forthcoming effort to roll out a permit “tracker” for the purpose of inter- and intra-agency sharing of projects that have applied for state permits and where those projects are in the stages of permit review. MREA is very supportive of this DEP initiative because it will help project developers track what can be a very lengthy permitting process and, like LD 1850, could yield important trends and new learnings.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eliza Donoghue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.  
Executive Director