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Senator, District 16

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony in Opposition to LD 2174 “An Act to Replace the Maine Waterway Development and Conservation Act with the Maine Renewable Energy and Associated Transmission Development and Conservation Act”**

**Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**

**February 25, 2026**

**1pm**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

I am Senator Scott Cyrway, and I represent District 16, which is comprised of Albion, Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville and Winslow. I am here today in strong opposition to LD 2174 to defend the rights of municipalities to make their own decisions regarding siting ordinances for energy projects.

Maine has a strong tradition of local control. We take pride in understanding the principle that decisions are best made by the communities impacted, and problems should be solved at the most local level possible. Unfortunately, the bill before you is a departure from our long-held beliefs, and it betrays towns who have passed ordinances in line with their values and plans for development.

The Town of Albion has an ordinance that requires lines be underground. Other towns have guidelines on the citing of solar arrays. These policies were created after careful consideration, debate, and voting by members of the communities that created them. The members of the community should not have their decisions made null and void by an overreach of state policy. Local Ordinances around energy projects often protect people’s land and livelihoods. I know of 13 different farms in my district which would have lost land in proposed projects. Thankfully, subsequent ordinances now protect them. Should this bill pass in its current form, these farmers will be at risk once again.

In addition to protecting the values and economy of a community, these ordinances also serve to strengthen public safety. Many towns have fire prevention codes which are absent in the state regulations. Should this bill pass, and safety standards are overridden, local fire departments and EMS may be stretched beyond capacity, forced into dangerous situations, or must fight fires without proper equipment. Each town has different sizes for fire trucks, different terrain and access concerns, and capacities for training. These unique situations simply cannot be addressed by a one size fits all state policy.

Maine is a large state, with many different communities. Each community has unique conditions that require careful consideration. What is good policy in Portland might be harmful for Albion. What is good policy for Albion might be harmful for Caribou. Does this body not trust the people in each municipality to decide for themselves how to zone for energy projects? When we tackle problems at a state level that are best handled at the town level, we all lose. For these reasons I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to take questions.