

Jane Palmer
Scarborough

Dear Members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee,

Although you are undoubtedly receiving many testimonies in support of LD 471 that stress the importance of this bill for the protection of Maine's beautiful, unspoiled public lands, I am writing to focus on another issue, an ethical consideration that I hope we all can agree is also of fundamental importance. This is the devastating effects of Hydro-Quebec's industrial policies and installations on the indigenous communities in northern Quebec where the dams are located.

As has been documented by North American Megadam Resistance Alliance, the hydro-electric dams and associated infrastructure have resulted in overwhelmingly destructive conditions for these northern Quebec first nation communities, including 2.6 million acres of reservoirs, thousands of miles of transmission and distribution lines and roads, and extensive pollution from the neurotoxin methylmercury, which is emitted when vegetation deteriorates in the flooded areas. These deplorable conditions have so profoundly undermined the health, well-being, and traditional culture of these communities that their suicide rate is five to seven times higher than the rest of Quebec. I hope we all can agree that genocide is not too strong a term to apply to this tragic situation.

While this destruction of the indigenous communities in northern Quebec is unfortunately a fait accompli, I hope we will not turn a blind eye and deaf ear to repeat performances planned for northeastern Canada, including the massive Gull Island project in Labrador. If our Maine Legislature is not given the power to stop the CMP Corridor, this installation will yield billions of dollars for Hydro-Quebec and its allies that will undoubtedly contribute funding for this ongoing, greed driven destruction of indigenous communities and cultures.

At this time in Maine, we are investing our hopes, extensive effort, and essential funding in the work of our Climate Council, which holds a commitment to climate justice as one of its fundamental values. In addition to protecting Maine's pristine public lands, LD 471 will support this commitment.

With thanks for your attention to my views, I am,
Sincerely yours,
Jane Palmer in Scarborough