



March 18, 2021

Senator Jim Dill, Chair
Representative Maggie O'Neil, Chair
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 471 “An Act To Require Legislative Approval for Certain Leases of Public Lands”

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Jeremy Payne and I am the Executive Director 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. MREA members sustainably manufacture electricity from hydro, biomass, wind, tidal, and solar.

MREA testifies neither for nor against LD 471 – while it seems clear that this bill may be aimed at proposals like Central Maine Power's (CMP) deeply unpopular New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) project, we do have some concern that the reaction to the public's opposition to CMP and NECEC may unintentionally implicate other Maine-made clean energy projects.

To the extent the committee intends on supporting LD 471, we would recommend it give consideration to narrowing the definition to ensure it does not require a supermajority of the Legislature for every de minimis lease that a clean energy project may require to become operational. Perhaps a workable approach would be to implement a lease size threshold in order for LD 471 to apply – this would help identify significant changes/impacts that would occur, versus those that are relatively minor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy N. Payne
Executive Director

www.renewablemaine.org