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Cape Elizabeth

Hello-

I'm writing to support LD 471. In November 1993, more than 72% of Maine voters voted to amend the Constitution in order to protect public lands. Specifically, they passed Article IX, Section 23 of the Maine Constitution, which states:

"State park land, public lots or other real estate held by the State for conservation or recreation purposes and designated by legislation implementing this section may not be reduced or its uses substantially altered except on the vote of 2/3 of all the members elected to each House. The proceeds from the sale of such land must be used to purchase additional real estate in the same county for the same purposes." LD 471 would further strengthen protections for public land in the State of Maine.

In 2014, BPL issued a lease to CMP for its corridor across two public lots in Western Maine, the Johnson Mountain and West Forks Plantation lots. They did so behind closed doors without any public notice. BPL revised the lease twice, in 2015 and 2020, both times without any public notice. Let me say that again, 'without any public notice.'

CMP would cut a 150-foot corridor through these public lots, fragmenting wildlife habitat and harming recreational opportunities. This would clearly reduce and substantially alter these lands that belong to all Maine people.

In spite of the requirement to get a 2/3 vote of the Legislature before issuing a lease for an obviously destructive project across public lands, BPL has failed to do so three times.

The Legislature needs to hold BPL accountable and make it very clear that BPL must get the required 2/3 vote for the CMP corridor and other projects like it that would irreparably damage public lands.

LD 471 would further spell out in Maine law that altering the use of public lands, especially through private, closed door meetings, is not tolerated. Please pass LD 471.
Thank you.