

Todd Towle
Kingfield

Good Day,

In 2014, the State signed a lease with Central Maine Power for 36 acres that bisect a parcel of public land in Somerset County between Johnson Mountain and Wilson Pond for construction of the NECEC Corridor without telling the owners of that land. The people of the state of Maine.

Even though the Corridor would significantly alter the value and use of the public land, and destroy critical wildlife habitat, it was granted behind closed doors and without the required legislative input for only \$1,400 per year or \$39 per acre. In 2015, yet another backroom deal was brokered with CMP, this time for \$3,600 per year, or \$100 per acre. These are two of the many backroom deals made for this project.

A third secret lease was again negotiated by the current administration in 2020, again without the required legislative approval. This is the type of policy and maneuvering that upsets me and hundreds of other Mainers to no end.

In 1993, 72% of Maine voters to amend the Maine Constitution to include Article IX, Section 23 to the Maine Constitution, which states: "State parkland, 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 $\frac{2}{3}$ 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.

The next year, the Legislature implemented this constitutional amendment.

Even though the law and our Constitution are very clear, two different administrations entered into illicit leases with CMP for the construction of the unpopular NECEC Corridor.

This bill simply reaffirms that the Bureau of Public Lands must secure a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote for the approval of their lease with CMP. These are Maine citizens' lands. Not one person or foreign corporations. This bill is to secure our land, our future, and the stewardship of the next generation of public lands.