

William Turner  
Harrison

By: William A. Turner, P.E.  
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Fax 207-583-4572, Cell 603-496-3942 to: Rep. Walter Riseman and Senator Richard  
Bennett  
Email: btair1@airdiagnostics.com Hearing 3- 18-2021 9 am  
Conservation and Forestry Committee

Testimony in Support of:

LD 471: "An Act To Require Legislative Approval for Certain Leases of Public  
Lands"

I am a 40 year resident of Harrison, Maine and a partially retired registered  
professional engineer in the State of Maine. I am a consultant to Turner Building  
Science & Design, LLC located in Harrison, Maine. I have spent most of my lifetime  
enjoying the wonder of Maine lakes and ponds.

Testimony: I support the adoption of LD 471 as a reasonable method of reaching appropriate  
actions on a controversial topic that has not been vetted appropriately.

- 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."

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, again both times without any public notice.

- Under this lease, CMP would cut a 150-foot corridor through these public lots,  
seriously fragmenting wildlife habitat and harming recreational opportunities. This  
would clearly reduce and substantially alter beyond repair 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.

Follow-Up: Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions about my  
concerns.

Submitted by:

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