

## Testimony to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee regarding LD 471

Hello,

My name is Barbara Vickery. I am a resident of Richmond, Maine. Though now retired, I am a conservation biologist and have spent most of my career working to conserve Maine natural environment. I am writing today to urge you to oppose LD 471.

Climate change poses the most significant threat to Maine's natural environment and our health and well-being. Maine's decarbonization goals laid out in the current plan are ambitious, but essential for the future of Maine's environment, public welfare and economy. And we can't afford delays in its rapid implementation.

One of the greatest challenges will be the development of a transmission grid that can deliver all the new sources of additional renewable energy we are going to need. Requiring that any transmission line crossing any public reserved land go through a review process that involves a 2/3 vote of legislature in addition to the normal time-consuming permitting process will bring multiple delays and mire the process in politics that have little to do with the merits of any particular proposed line.

The current Maine statute governing uses of public reserved lands already allows leases for utility lines; there are 18 of them on those public units across the state. It also already provides that any substantial alteration of the uses of public reserved lands get 2/3 approval from the Maine legislature. LD 471 specifies that it be retroactive to Sept. 16, 2014, thus targeting the lease for a transmission line crossing two public lots in Somerset County. That lease is for a corridor one mile long, 300 feet wide. However, the NECEC transmission corridor there would be only 150 feet wide and the area to be cleared to the ground is only 54 feet wide. That is only 6 acres out of 1225 acres of those 2 units, or less than one half of 1 % of the land. Given that those lots already have both rail lines and another transmission corridor crossing them, the latter involving 36 acres of cleared land, it seems a major exaggeration to say the proposed transmission line would constitute a "substantial alteration" of the current uses of this public reserved lot warranting a 2/3 vote of the legislature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara. Vickery

Barbara Vickery  
Richmond

Testimony to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee regarding LD 471

Hello,

My name is Barbara Vickery. I am a resident of Richmond, Maine. Though now retired, I am a conservation biologist and have spent most of my career working to conserve Maine natural environment. I am writing today to urge you to oppose LD 471.

Climate change poses the most significant threat to Maine's natural environment and our health and well-being. Maine's decarbonization goals laid out in the current plan are ambitious, but essential for the future of Maine's environment, public welfare and economy. And we can't afford delays in its rapid implementation.

One of the greatest challenges will be the development of a transmission grid that can deliver all the new sources of additional renewable energy we are going to need. Requiring that any transmission line crossing any public reserved land go through a review process that involves a 2/3 vote of legislature in addition to the normal time-consuming permitting process will bring multiple delays and mire the process in politics that have little to do with the merits of any particular proposed line.

The current Maine statute governing uses of public reserved lands already allows leases for utility lines; there are 18 of them on those public units across the state. It also already provides that any substantial alteration of the uses of public reserved lands get 2/3 approval from the Maine legislature. LD 471 specifies that it be retroactive to Sept. 16, 2014, thus targeting the lease for a transmission line crossing two public lots in Somerset County. That lease is for a corridor one mile long, 300 feet wide. However, the NECEC transmission corridor there would be only 150 feet wide and the area to be cleared to the ground is only 54 feet wide. That is only 6 acres out of 1225 acres of those 2 units, or less than one half of 1 % of the land. Given that those lots already have both rail lines and another transmission corridor crossing them, the latter involving 36 acres of cleared land, it seems a major exaggeration to say the proposed transmission line would constitute a "substantial alteration" of the current uses of this public reserved lot warranting a 2/3 vote of the legislature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara. Vickery