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Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committee, I am a Maine citizen writing in support of L.D. 1075, An Act to Protect Public Lands.

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands to adopt rules that establish an objective evaluation process for determining if a proposed activity on designated land would cause the land to be reduced or substantially altered. As an example of why this is needed, we are currently failing to protect our space and species around and in electric transmission corridors in part due to a lack of proper and co-ordinated procedures in lands leasing and permitting.

Just a few days ago I listened in on a federal appeals court case for a new injunction against CMP regarding their expansion of the electric corridor. It was clear that the judges were relying on insufficient information about forest fragmentation. CMP, owned by Avangrid, which itself is the US arm of Iberdrola SA, a foreign entity, has not invested in our environment's health as much as their pocketbooks. CMP preferred to see no potential significant harm rather than the truth of the matter. Expertise on forest fragmentation was provided earlier on in the project review by Malcolm Hunter, Jr, Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Libra Professor of Conservation Biology at the University of Maine, but was not referenced in the oral arguments. Tux Turkel wrote recently in the Portland Press Herald that "U.S. Rep. Jared Golden and the Penobscot Nation have called on the Biden administration to rescind the presidential permit and the finding of no significant environmental impact, and to conduct a more extensive environmental review."

It needs to be underscored that our own legislature and the public deserve proper notice and the ability to respond following a set of consistent policies and rules on proposals to lease or sell our public lands, something we lacked with this transmission line project. Please pass LD 1075.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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