

In Support Of:

LD# 1075 An Act to Protect Public Lands

Presented by Senator BENNETT of Oxford.

Cosponsored by Representative O'NEIL of Saco & Senators: BLACK of Franklin, BRENNER of Cumberland, MAXMIN of Lincoln, Representatives: GROHOSKI of Ellsworth, LANDRY of Farmington, SKOLFIELD of Weld.

Dear Senator Jim Dill, Representative Maggie O'Neil, and other esteemed members of the Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Committee,

My name is Heidi J Vierthaler, I am a Social and Environmental Advocate, with a BA in Geography and Anthropology from the Class of 1994 at the University of Southern Maine.

I am writing to you today to urge you to stop the Central Maine Power CMP Hydro-Quebec New England Clean Energy Connect NECEC Transmission Line Corridor. To me LD# 1075 An Act to Protect Public Lands, would be a step in the right direction in that effort.

I am grateful for the opportunity to communicate with you today regarding this issue, and while I understand that the parameters within which you are working might be limited to what is happening here in Maine, I do hope that you will take a good look at the situation with the way that Hydro-Quebec has reneged on their promises to the Cree and Inuit, and their Ecosystem and try to take as much of their situation into consideration, when your Department of Environmental Protection makes in your decisions, especially regarding our ability to trust ANY agreement with Hydro-Quebec.

I echo the Testimony that I left for this Committee on 2-17-2021, 3-18-2021 regarding L.D. 471. An Act To Require Legislative Approval for Certain Leases of Public Lands, and I also urge you to pass this LD# 1075 An Act to Protect Public Lands.

In 1993, 72% of Mainers voted to protect Maine's public lands by amending the Maine Constitution to require a vote of 2/3 of the Legislature for sales or leases that substantially reduce or alter the value of land held in public trust. That amendment to the Maine Constitution did not specify what a reduction or substantial alteration of value is, essentially creating a loophole for shady companies like CMP to take advantage of. Which is exactly how two administrations in a row have issued leases to CMP without the constitutionally-required Legislative vote. Justice Murphy confirmed this when she found that the Bureau didn't properly identify if the NECEC would substantially reduce or alter the value of the land before issuing the leases.

Mainers made their voices heard in 1993 when they voted for the amendment. They made it clear that we want a say in the sale of public lands that are going to reduce or substantially alter the value of those lands and LD 1075 puts an objective process in place to determine if a proposed activity on designated land would cause the land to be reduced or substantially altered closing that loophole and ensuring openness and transparency going forward.

I urge you to vote Ought to pass on LD 1075 to ensure that the Maine Constitution is upheld and that there is no longer a loophole for major leases to be approved on public lands that are going to reduce or substantially alter their value without the approval of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Maine Legislature.

The following paragraphs are what I have been sending recently to garner support to stop the NECEC and while I reiterate that I am well aware that this might be beyond the realm of your consideration of the scope of your inquiry and investigation in this examination; I beseech you to take these issues to heart in as much as you possibly can in your deliberation on this issue.

I'm reaching out to you today because Hydro-Quebec's current proposal here in Maine will impact the indigenous Cree people of James Bay ...we will all be impacted by this devastating Hydro-Quebec deal with Massachusetts that wants to run a massive powerline corridor right through the pristine forests of our sacred lands here in Maine.

The point of prevention where we can stop this is here in Maine: We need to stop the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) Transmission Line Corridor. The NECEC is the deceptive name given to the egregious deal between Central Maine Power (CMP) and Hydro-Quebec. It would deliver Hydro-Quebec's electricity to Massachusetts by carving a massive Transmission Line Corridor thru our precious Maine woods. (Imagine the NJ Turnpike with a center line of massive, high-voltage transformers going down the middle of your favorite get-away spot. Add a little Round-up to the under-growth, and it's not a pretty picture. The Cree can tell you all about the devastating results. Life will get worse for them, too, if Hydro-Quebec has this excuse to build more dams.)

Massachusetts has already signed a contract with Hydro-Quebec. In Maine, the relevant agencies are currently reviewing and assessing the project.

We sincerely hope that you'll join us in this grassroots movement to stop this NECEC monstrosity.

To introduce you to what we in Maine are being asked to relinquish in terms of our pristine Maine wilderness, please see this short (8:16 min) video *What is The CMP Corridor Project?* as part of the *From Away* series from Barrel Up Productions.

<https://youtu.be/ql0cSpGGUws>

If you have another 5:29 minutes, this video tells just how special our pristine Maine Woods is:

<https://vimeo.com/253324517>

On the other hand, the Cree and Inuit have been suffering from Cultural Genocide and Ecological Ethnic Cleansing since the mid 1970's because Hydro-Quebec's Mega Dams have flooded their sacred lands, causing mercury poisoning in their fish and up through their entire food chain. This has obliterated their sustenance existence and their spiritually oriented, indigenous way of life, forcing them to become dependent upon an incompatible Western Consumer-Oriented Economy. Furthermore we need to urgently learn from the Cree that Hydro-Quebec can not be trusted.

The scope of your Hearing should take into consideration the history of Hydro-Quebec, owned and operated by the Government of Quebec, Canada, in not living up to their own promises. That we need to learn from the Cree, before it's too late: that we should reject the New England Clean Energy Connect NECEC Transmission Line Corridor, because: how can we trust Hydro-Quebec? – if Hydro-Quebec, Quebec, and Canada, have not honored their treaties, and all of the agreements etc., that they have made with not just the Cree, but many of their other Indigenous Citizens, including those in the tar sands extraction zones in Alberta. That we know that we can not trust that Hydro-Quebec will honor the agreements that they have made with all of us in Maine, because they haven't even begun to Honor those that they have already made with their own Cree and Inuit Citizens.

Furthermore I want to remind you too that Central Maine Power (CMP), a subsidiary of Avangrid Networks Inc., traded on the New York Stock Exchange with it's majority owner Spanish energy giant: Iberdrola USA Inc., with it's abysmal record of recklessly abusing it's customers with overage charges, which it cannot seem to forgive, but still keeps paying for advertising to promote this NECEC Monstrosity, and has been given the worst rating in the JD Power list of Electric Companies in America,

(See: <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2019-electric-utility-residential-customer-satisfaction-study>);

cannot be trusted with the complex planning, engineering, construction, and operation of such a complicated Transmission Line Corridor.

To further prove my point I am sending:

- My Fact Sheet: "Be a Climate Change Hero – Maine, New England, & the World: Stop Hydro-Quebec and the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC)!!", and the fact that installing the NECEC Transmission Line Corridor would be a grave mistake in such a sparsely populated region with scarce Emergency Management Personnel and Resources, especially with all of the forest fires that we are seeing around the world but most especially in Australia. We need to protect what is left of the carbon sequestering resource of our pristine Maine Forest, and the lives of all living in the area, and globally.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157195142947605&id=690312604

- My White Paper Report: Stop The NECEC for the Cree and ME:
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10156806333672605&id=690312604
- In this there are a couple of films that would be good introductions for the destruction of the Cree and their ecosystem, and I didn't want these to be overlooked:
 - *1972: The James Bay Hydro Electric Project*, a contractor sales film, is probably the best short video, that describes how the Hydro-Quebec Mega Dams were built into the Cree landscape, when they moved the entire village of Fort George on an island to the mainland where it became the Community of Chisasibi. It is heartwrenching to see just how much disrespect to the land Hydro-Quebec had, and it describes the social services that were established, but to little avail as will be discussed further.
<https://youtu.be/GmGCifYrfzI>
 - *One More River*: by Rezolution Pictures: This film gives a compelling reason why we should not trust anything that Hydro-Quebec tells us. Filmmakers Neil Diamond and Tracey Deer travel deep into James Bay to follow Cree Filmmaker Earnest Webb, in an emotional behind the scenes process up to the signing of the *Paix des Braves Agreement* of 2002, and how the Native Cree Tallymen hunters raced to stop it's implementation in which Hydro-Quebec Mega Dams would divert the Rupert River, and how the Grand Council of the Cree Government were swayed to sign onto to it. It also features Cree Advocate Roger Orr, and my Cree Friends Matthew Mukash and Larry House who truly stood up for their People and Ecosystem. Do we really want to make the same mistakes that the Cree made in signing onto something with Hydro-Quebec?
<https://youtu.be/gUlZejaruII>
- Links to our new websites: <https://www.notoneceec.com/>
<https://www.nocmpcorridor.com/>
- This link to my Facebook Live Stream of your Army Corp of Engineers Hearing in Lewiston, 12/5/2019, because I ask you to consider in your review the information in the Description. In it I include links to some of the relevant websites of those who gave their Testimony, I want you to learn more about the people giving their Testimony, and the relevant books and articles about James Bay (I do hope that you will be able to get a copy of Hans Carlson's book as part of your "evidence", I hope that by my including it here that you will enter it

into your record. At this moment I am still editing this description, but I am sending it now to be sure that it is entered into the record.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157353166917605&id=690312604

- My new Friend Heather House's, now finished, Hunger Strike regarding the lack of consultation over the recent \$4.7 Billion Development Agreement the "Grande Alliance". This points to just one more example of how the Government of Quebec AND the so-called Cree Leadership has recklessly not honored their own Indigenous Citizens, and why we as a state should not trust the deal between our state and theirs, and it would make us even more complicit in the further Genocide and Ecological Ethnic Cleansing of our Cree Neighbors to our North in the James Bay ecosystem South of Hudson Bay.

This is just another reason why we should encourage our Maine Voter Friends to sign our Referendum endeavor by Sunday, January 10th, you need to sign in person, our No CMP Corridor Referendum at our signature events for registered Maine voters:

<https://www.nocmpcorridor.com/events>

Please See My Full Post of Heather House's Hunger Strike with:

- The History of her Region
- The disturbing history of the way that the Canadian Crown Corporation's Quebec Government, it's Hydro-Quebec Utilities Company, and even the Cree Government: The Grand Council of the Cree, have been working in collusion at the expense of the sacred Cree Ecosystem of our world,
and
- The reason for, history, and ending of Heather House's Hunger Strike.

More importantly it has Heather's Facebook Live Stream of her passionate reading of her eloquent "Open Letter" to the Grand Council of the Cree Leadership.

See the post here:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10158405779107605&id=690312604

A never again is happening again, and we as a state should not sanction such egregious human rights violations. We as a state should stand proud that we are respecting the sovereign needs of our Cree and other Indigenous Neighbors, as an example for the world to see.

I hope that we can count on you for your support to stop this destructive plan of the New England Clean Energy Connect NECEC Transmission Line Corridor. If I can be of any further assistance to you, because my numbers are unlisted and confidential, I can be reached at the numbers that I will leave with the Maine Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Department Clerk, Cheryl McGowan.

I finally reiterate that I hope that you will keep the Cree, Our Maine Community, and the World, in your hearts as you cast your votes, as all of our lives are in your hands.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

All of my best to you and yours.

Heidi J Vierthaler

Resident in Southern Maine, close to Brunswick.

Heidi J Vierthaler
Social and Environmental Advocate from Southern Maine in Wabanaki Territory near
Brunswick.

If I can join you, I would like to, but I might not be able to do so. So send me a message on Zoom before you announce my Testimony. Thank you.