



Testimony in Support of LD 82, Resolve, To Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project

by

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Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, I am pleased to provide this testimony in support of LD 82, a Resolve to Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project.

This Resolve is essentially about good governance and planning. It requests that the governor communicate with the premiers of the provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec about the Atlantic Loop project under discussion in Canada and report back to this Committee. Importantly, this Resolve does not commit the state to a particular policy position on the Atlantic Loop project.

The timing is right for this Resolve.

As noted in LD 82, the Atlantic Loop project was identified as a priority by the Governor General of Canada in the session-opening speech to Parliament in September 2020. This project was described as achieving the goal of interconnecting the energy grids of five Canadian provinces, with the potential to impact Maine's energy grid. But aside from the 2020 announcement and related news clips, details about this potential project remain scant, indicating that there is still time for Maine to engage with our Canadian neighbors to advocate for Maine's interests before the details become set in stone. Waiting for a concrete plan to emerge could leave very little time for Maine to inform the process and protect our state's interests.

Maine should ask hard questions.

At this point, the list of questions about the Atlantic Loop is significantly longer than the list of knowns, making any decision about the merits of the project premature. Mainers deserve to learn as much as possible about the project before any commitments are made that would impact Maine, its resources, or its residents. The following list represents just a sampling of the questions that Governor Mills could pursue in dialogue with the premiers of the five provinces contemplating the Atlantic Loop:

- What impact would this project have on Maine's energy infrastructure? Would it require upgrades to existing infrastructure or new transmission infrastructure?

- What impact would this project have on Maine's environment?
- Would the project impact Maine's energy mix? If yes, how would Maine ensure that it advances Maine's progress toward zero emissions?
- What impact would this project have on Maine's energy rates?
- Would this project require construction of new hydroelectric dams in Canada? If yes, where would those dams be located? How would greenhouse gas emissions be quantified from those hydroelectric facilities? What other impacts would such dams cause to wildlife, fisheries, and habitat?
- How are Indigenous Peoples in Canada being engaged in the conversations? Would any required new infrastructure cause impacts on the lands of Indigenous Peoples in Canada?

This is just a short and incomplete list to demonstrate the complexity and breadth of unknowns about this project. Early and robust engagement in this important planning process by Maine's governor, as long as it does not commit the state to a particular course, would be beneficial to the state in any future negotiations related to the Atlantic Loop project.

For these reasons, NRCM supports LD 82, a Resolve to Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project.