



Sierra Club Maine

PO Box 1374 Yarmouth, ME

Phone: (207) 761-5616

maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

www.sierraclub.org/maine

To: Committee on Energy Utilities & Technology
From: Joan B. Saxe, Sierra Club Maine
Date: February 18, 2021
Re: Testimony in LD82 Resolve

Senator Lawrence Representative Berry and members of the Energy Utilities & Technology Committee: My name is Joan B. Saxe, and I represent Sierra Club Maine and our 22,000 supporters and members across the state and we are members of the North American Megadam Resistance Alliance. (NAMRA).

The North American Megadam Resistance Alliance (NAMRA), a volunteer-led coalition of grassroots groups and individuals dedicated to protecting rivers and their communities by resisting megadams and their transmission corridors. FMI:

<http://northeastmegadamresistance.org/>

NAMRA acknowledges:

- that free-flowing rivers are an endangered species requiring protection; that they are vital to ecological health;
- that floodplains and primary boreal forests are needed for climate resilience;
- that large dams do irreversible damage to communities and ecosystems.
- that the need to shut down fossil fuel and nuclear plants, but do not accept that imports of electricity from large dams hundreds of miles away is the right alternative
- that energy conservation and efficiency, and small-scale, appropriately sited renewable energy development relying only on local energy resources along with distributed generation is a better alternative

The Sierra Club members and partners on either side of the US border are hard at work pushing back against this environmental injustice in North America and throughout the world. The Sierra Club is especially concerned about the social injustice being forced upon the indigenous peoples of Canada. Many of us feel that Maine and other states in the US are complicit in condoning cultural genocide and environmental destruction by our actions - or our inaction in opposition.

The one sentence mentioned of an Atlantic Loop in the Throne Speech to the Canadian Parliament in September of 2020 is a rehash of a decade long dream of interconnection of electricity between the Atlantic Provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick, Labrador/ Newfoundland and Nova Scotia as well as Quebec.



Sierra Club Maine

PO Box 1374 Yarmouth, ME

Phone: (207) 761-5616

maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

www.sierraclub.org/maine

This “resolve” implies that Maine hopes to realize a position in the planning process of a infrastructure project of a foreign country without an understanding of the background and complexity of this issue from the environmental, political, financial and Indigenous cultural aspects.

Furthermore and more importantly, Maine’s involvement could/would encourage more new megadams in the future to satisfy an export market to the United States.

The Canadian hydropower industry is mostly **government owned monopolies** with the exclusive right to exploit rivers for profit across Canada with little to no transparency or accountability. Companies like Hydro Quebec have not had to disclose their green house gas accounting models or other information concerning emissions from large dams for public perusal.

Companies like Hydro Quebec, when they have done cursory studies on GHG emission, have used models that average the emissions over 50 to 100 years which ignores the fact that new dams emit massive amounts of CO2 and Methane in the first two to three decades after flooding of the river.

Maine should be working to promote solar, wind, geothermal and energy efficiency projects and companies here at home to create help the environment create jobs and financial benefits.

Famous American conservationist Aldo Leopold observed, “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as community to which we belong we may begin to use it with love and respect.” Many of the citizens of Labrador and Quebec both indigenous and non indigenous as well as communities of Western Canada have known for years their land has been abused for the colonist purposes and they are finally fighting back even suing the government for disrespecting their land and being complicit in cultural genocide for profit.

Abuse of rivers for profit as the Gull Island project in Labrador is slated to be, will also be the first laceration in a Canadian Federal “death by a thousand cuts” initiative to dam remaining rivers in Canada. No dams are being built in the United States. In fact they are being removed. In the Northwest for example, removing the dams on the Snake River, creates an opportunity to be the largest restoration effort in history to benefit the preservation of salmon, the environment and every sector of the regions economy. Here in Maine, we too are taking down dams. The removal of the Edwards Dam from the Kennebec River the Veazie Dams from the Penobscot are examples of successes allowing Maine's sea run fish to successfully return.



Sierra Club Maine

PO Box 1374 Yarmouth, ME

Phone: (207) 761-5616

maine.chapter@sierraclub.org

www.sierraclub.org/maine

There will be more conflict down the road regarding transmission lines are proposed and built as the land it used as a commodity. I know the lines will be needed to transfer real renewable electricity. We are aware that ISO-NE and FERC along with other government agencies are in the planning process for sighting in the age of the fast growing need for the upcoming multiple renewable energy projects being planned. These will be more conveniently accessible to the power source as compared with the massive transmission lines need to send power from Canada.

As you march forward with this plan please educate yourself about the neuro toxic methyl mercury increases in the fisheries, a traditional food source of Canada's indigenous families and how these dams exacerbate climate change through methane and CO2 releases; through heat pollution causing warming oceans; through the climate changes these massive reservoirs cause locally, regionally and globally, the destruction of the environment from the CO2 sequestering boreal forest, peat moss and many important wetlands.

We will be happy to provide you with a plethora of scientific evidence as you proceed from our library of peer-reviewed work.

Joan B, Saxe joansaxe@gmail.com