



February 18, 2021

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair
The Hon. Seth Berry, Co-chair
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 82, “Resolve, To Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project”

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Berry, and members of the EUT Committee:

On behalf of Longroad Energy (Longroad), I am writing to provide testimony in support of L.D. 82, “Resolve, To Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project,” sponsored by Rep. Kessler.

Longroad develops solar and wind energy projects throughout the United States. We employ more than a dozen people in our 24x7 operations center in Portland and one person at our Weaver Wind operations center in Aurora. Longroad recently completed construction and commenced operation of the Weaver Wind project in the towns of Eastbrook, Waltham, and Aurora. From Portland, our team of Maine Maritime Academy graduates and U.S. military veterans operates hundreds of renewable energy power plants across the country.

Many of us on the Longroad team have been developing renewable energy projects in Maine for over 15 years, and during that time, we have added approximately 700 megawatts of clean energy in northern and eastern Maine. This has involved a total investment of over a billion dollars. In the process, we have gained a significant understanding of the challenges of Maine’s electricity transmission system, and experience working with Canadian utilities and energy companies.

Longroad is appreciative that Rep. Kessler is bringing attention to the opportunity to improve transmission to northern and eastern Maine, and the potential to unlock economic development in those parts of the state through new renewable power development. As we understand it currently, the Atlantic Loop is a concept that would substantially increase transmission among Canada’s four Maritime Provinces and Quebec. The specific routes, timing,

capacity, and other details have not been determined, based on press reports. But there is reason to believe that the Atlantic Loop might include transmission upgrades in Maine, or at least on our border.

The Canadian federal government has signaled its support for the Atlantic Loop concept, in order to help Atlantic Canada move away from coal-fired power and to maximize the use of Labrador's and Quebec's hydro and wind assets. A report due next month (*Clean Power Roadmap for Atlantic Canada*) is expected to provide more details about the plan. To the degree the plan recommends the Loop involve Maine, it could unlock a significant economic opportunity for our state.

Longroad has a large-scale wind project in Aroostook County in the early stages of development that could easily double the amount of wind power currently operating in Maine. There are other companies that also have similar plans to develop large wind or solar projects in northern or eastern Maine. Collectively, the investment could be many billions of dollars. The thing that holds these projects back is transmission.¹

It is also possible that more and better transmission ties to Canada would both strengthen our electric system and increase the affordability of decarbonization efforts. A study out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) concluded that decarbonization efforts on both sides of the border would be significantly more affordable with the addition of new transmission to facilitate the two-way trading of electricity to help balance the variable output of renewable resources.² In its recently released climate analysis, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reached a similar conclusion regarding the importance to New England of coordination with neighboring provinces to balance the ISO-New England system. Rather than the north-to-south flow that has been the model, the Massachusetts analysis is that Canadian hydro assets will transition over time "into the role of a 'battery' for the Northeast region, with electricity flowing in both directions, depending on the timing of renewable production and loads on both sides of the U.S.- Canada border."³

¹ Existing renewable assets – including hydro, biomass, and wind – could also greatly benefit from new transmission.

² *Two-Way Trade in Green Electrons: Deep Decarbonization of the Northeastern U.S. and the Role of Canadian Hydropower*, MIT Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research, Emil Dimanchev, Joshua Hodge, and John Parsons, <http://ceep.mit.edu/files/papers/2020-003.pdf>

³ *Energy Pathways to Deep Decarbonization: A Technical Report of the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap Study*, December 2020, p. 6, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/energy-pathways-for-deep-decarbonization-report/download>

In summary, Longroad agrees with the fundamental concept of L.D. 82 that Maine would benefit from engaging with our Canadian neighbors on the Atlantic Loop. As they continue to decarbonize their energy generation, Maine is geographically well positioned to provide renewable power to meet this goal and to work together to affordably and reliably meet climate targets.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew T. Kearns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "K".

Matthew T. Kearns
Chief Development Officer