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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**An Act Pertaining to Transmission Lines Not Needed for Reliability
L.D. 170**

**GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE
February 25, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Dan Burgess and I am the Director of the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

The GEO testifies neither for nor against L.D. 170.

As was identified in the recent State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment¹ completed by the GEO, transmission is a key component of Maine's renewable energy future. Particularly as the state pursues beneficial electrification of heating and transportation to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, the state – and New England region – will need to generate additional renewable electricity. In order to provide that power to the grid, transmission infrastructure will be required, especially considering the amount of congestion and constraints already on Maine's electricity grid.

The proposed L.D. 170 would require any transmission and distribution utility proposing the construction of a 'nonessential' transmission line and seeking the required certificate of public convenience and necessity from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to provide a minimum benefit to ratepayers in the state of equal value to the ratepayer-funded physical assets used to construct the new line. In order to do so, the PUC must first determine the value of the ratepayer-funded physical assets.


While the GEO supports the concept of ensuring adequate ratepayer benefits to development in Maine, the GEO is concerned about potential unintended consequences of this proposal and the definition of 'nonessential' transmission lines. To that end, the GEO would be interested in learning more from the PUC about how they would conduct the analysis of value of existing infrastructure and what qualifies as the 'ratepayer-funded assets' for any one project given the interconnected nature of the electricity grid.

¹ Governor's Energy Office. *State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment*. February 2021.
https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/GEO_Renewable%20Energy%20Goals%20Market%20Assessment_Feb%202021_1.pdf

Given the consideration of some of these unknowns and what the impact of the proposed legislation may be, the GEO additionally expresses some concerns around the possibility of this legislation creating impediments to clean energy deployment in the state. It is clear that additional renewable electricity generation will be required for the state to meet its clean energy and climate goals. Therefore, careful consideration should be made to understand the outcome of this proposal and recognize any impacts this may have on the ability for the state to meet its clean energy requirements. It should also be recognized that Maine is part of a regional electricity grid, with New England states also pursuing significant clean energy goals. It is important to ensure that the state continues to allow for the opportunity for regional collaboration in meeting those goals and does not, perhaps unintentionally, hinder that ability.

The GEO appreciates the attention to transmission development and careful consideration of ratepayer benefits of elective transmission development. As stated previously, the GEO understands that transmission is a key component of renewable electricity generation and generally supports pursuing policies related to careful consideration of transmission development and considering ratepayer impacts.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Burgess".

Dan Burgess, Director
Governor's Energy Office