

Tony Buxton  
Industrial Energy Consumer Group

Testimony of Tony Buxton on behalf of Industrial Energy Consumer Group  
Neither For Nor Against  
LD 170, An Act Pertaining to Transmission Lines Not Needed for Reliability or Local  
Generation

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology;

I am Tony Buxton of Preti Flaherty, testifying on behalf of Industrial Energy Consumer Group, as association of larger energy consumers formed in 1985 to participate in regulatory and legislative matters affecting the price and reliability of energy supply. In 2019, IECG founded its Climate Initiative and the website [getmaineclimateright.com](http://getmaineclimateright.com) to help Maine make smart climate decisions. IECG accepts consensus climate science and rapid, cost effective climate action.

IECG testifies today neither for nor against LD 170, at least for now. We do so because, as you may be aware, there is some public controversy arising about electric transmission lines, and we want to see all the bills on the topic this session and consider them together. We suggest you do so as well.

Further, IECG and the Public Advocate joined, with help from Governor Mills, to negotiate additional public benefits from CMP's NECEC line. This took tremendous effort, but we won additional public benefits for Maine in excess of \$258 million over 40 years. IECG understands transmission lines and public benefits pretty well. "We know a thing or two, because we've seen a thing or two".

However, we also urge the Committee and its Staff review other means to assure public benefits from transmission lines. Maine's corridor statute, now expired, resulted from this Committee's earlier careful analysis of the risks and benefits of such lines, including the risk of federal preemption of state authority. The corridor statute arose out of concerns similar to those here, that Maine's unique location and rich renewable generation potential would attract transmission lines devoted mostly, or entirely, to moving power to southern New England. The corridor statute took all these risks into account and both protected Maine's sovereignty and ensured public benefit. We urge you to keep in mind this problem has existed since 1970. There are other solutions to be examined.

But most importantly, IECG urges great caution here. Electric transmission is extremely complex in terms of physics, law and politics, and it is an essential component of beneficial electrification and getting Maine to zero carbon. If we expand the capacity of Maine's grid by 3 to 5 times to electrify heating and transportation, or even double its capacity, we will need additional transmission. Bigger lines will be better because there will be fewer. The reliability distinction may not be useful, as in a network grid all lines are about reliability, as Texas has shown by its deliberate isolation.

And finally, we suggest you put all transmission legislation in context. Maine is presently the transmission battleground of two huge foreign corporations: NextEra, the nation's largest utility, and Iberdrola, one of the larger utilities in the world. As Spain was the victim in the precursor to World War II, so Maine may suffer the harms of war between foreign interests. Changing or creating policy based on their battle may not promote the long-term interests of Maine. We do not suggest this bill does that; we do suggest caution amidst the raging battle.

We look forward to working with the Committee.

I am happy to answer any questions.