



February 25, 2021

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Seth Berry, Chair
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 170, “An Act Pertaining to Transmission Lines Not Needed for Reliability or Local Generation”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Jeremy Payne and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA). MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry. MREA members sustainably manufacture electricity from hydro, biomass, wind, tidal, and solar.

The MREA testifies neither for nor against LD 170 because as drafted it may introduce obstacles to critically necessary transmission infrastructure investments in order to accomplish many important policy goals, e.g. reducing greenhouse gases, continued progress of offshore wind, and connecting Northern Maine to the rest of the New England grid to facilitate clean energy development in Aroostook County.

The bill presents a lot of unanswered questions, and we understand the sponsor will be offering an amendment which may offer many of the answers to those questions. It is also possible the inquiry the Public Utilities Commission is instructed to open may address some of these issues. Still, our questions include:

- What is a ratepayer benefit? When do they need to be realized? Must it be equitable across all ratepayers and classes?
- What if a merchant developer partners on a transmission project with a Maine utility?
- What does “primarily” mean as drafted in Sec 2, 4-E-B.?

It is commonly understood that transmission investment is vital if we are to achieve our greenhouse gas reduction goals, and we want to be sure any efforts to restrict that is clear, narrow, and does not create unintended consequences.

www.renewablemaine.org

Thank you for your time and consideration.¹

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. N. Payne", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeremy N. Payne
Executive Director

¹ All of the views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the positions of each of our members. Since MREA represents a broad spectrum of companies, we anticipate some members may submit comments of their own.