



JANET MILLS  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

DAN BURGESS  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNOR'S  
ENERGY OFFICE

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

### An Act To Remove the Municipal Ordinance Exemption for the Development of Nonessential Transmission Lines

L.D. 1587

#### GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE

May 4, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Melissa Winne and I am the Energy Policy Analyst for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

#### **The GEO testifies neither for nor against L.D. 1587.**

The proposed legislation primarily would eliminate the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) authority to grant a whole or partial exemption from an ordinance for construction of a nonessential transmission line by an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility for the transmission and distribution of electricity from a generation source located outside of Maine when the Public Utilities Commission determines that the exemption is reasonably necessary for public welfare and convenience.

As was identified in the GEO's recent State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment<sup>1</sup>, 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 significant amounts of additional renewable electricity. In order to provide that power to the grid and to customers, transmission infrastructure will be required, especially considering the amount of congestion and constraints already on Maine's electricity grid.

The GEO is concerned about potential unintended consequences of this legislation and the proposed definition of "nonessential transmission lines." The GEO specifically expresses concerns around the possibility of this legislation creating impediments to clean energy deployment in the state. Across the region and nationally it is recognized that transmission will be needed to be upgraded and expanded to meet our clean energy targets. Just last week, the Biden Administration made several announcements related to supporting the expansion and modernization of the electric grid, including new financial tools and guidance to build transmission lines.<sup>2</sup> Careful consideration should be made to understand the

---

<sup>1</sup> Governor's Energy Office. *State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment*. February 2021.

<https://www.maine.gov/energy/studies-reports-working-groups/completed-reports>

<sup>2</sup> White House Fact Sheet: Biden Administration Advances Expansion & Modernization of the Electric Grid, April 2021: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/27/fact-sheet-biden-administration-advances-expansion-modernization-of-the-electric-grid/>

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. Particularly, the GEO is concerned with how the definition of “nonessential transmission lines” may impact our ability for regional coordination. It is important to ensure that the State continues to allow for opportunities for regional collaboration in meeting those goals and does not hinder that ability.

The GEO recommends that the committee fully and carefully consider these concerns before moving forward with any changes to process for necessary transmission development.

Thank you for your consideration and I welcome any questions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Winne".

Melissa Winne  
Energy Policy Analyst, Governor's Energy Office