

## **Energy Utilities, and Technology Committee**

### **LD 1710 - An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine**

#### **Testimony from Amy Kurt, EDP Renewables North America May 18, 2021**

Good morning Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology. My name is Amy Kurt and I am a Senior Manager of Government Affairs for EDP Renewables NA (EDPR). I am pleased to testify today in support of LD 1710 - An Act To Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine.

We encourage this committee to act swiftly to pass LD 1710 for numerous reasons. This legislation will:

1. Enable Maine to meet its clean energy and climate goals in a cost-effective manner;
2. Bring new jobs and economic development opportunities to a critical area of the state;
3. Provide Maine with an opportunity to take advantage of the federal tax credits for major transmission projects that are currently being contemplated by congress;
4. Give clean energy businesses an opportunity to bring the best projects forward for consideration, at no risk to Maine ratepayers.

EDP Renewables North America LLC is the fourth-largest owner and operator of wind energy in the United States and around the world. With 53 operating wind farms and 8 solar parks across North America, our team of more than 800 developers, engineers, wind technicians, and other experts are eager to help Maine tap into its valuable wind energy resources, among the best in the eastern U.S.

EDPR started our initial development efforts in Maine in Aroostook County about 20 years ago – signing leases with landowners and testing the wind speeds. Since then, we have developed a top-notch wind farm, the Number Nine Wind Farm, which, at its smallest, would be about 250 Megawatts (MW), and at its largest, it could bring about 1,000 MW (or 1 Gigawatt) of clean energy to market.

But, this project has been stalled for one very simple reason: The County lacks the electrical infrastructure to bring its clean energy resources to the grid and ultimately to consumers. If enacted, LD 1710 creates a real opportunity to build the Number Nine Wind Farm.

LD 1710 enables consumers to access some of Maine's most desirable on-shore wind energy resources, which are located in some of the hardest to reach areas of the state, such as Aroostook County.

Once constructed, a transmission line to Aroostook County would offer the state many benefits for decades to come. It would provide a pathway for more generation – wind, solar, biomass,

hydro, and storage. It would bring major new economic benefits: tens of millions of dollars in tax revenue and thousands of construction jobs and dozens of permanent jobs to Maine and particularly Aroostook County. And, new transmission lines are the highway for Maine to export its clean energy resources to help other New England states meet their climate goals.

If Maine only harvested enough timber, lobsters, and blueberries to meet the needs of the state, the economy would look much different. Maine has been blessed with another natural resource which can drive its economy, create jobs and bring new opportunities to areas of the state that are in need: wind energy. Maine has the best wind energy resource in New England. Northern Maine has the available land, supportive landowners, and has been identified as an area for “expedited permitting” because it is ideally situated for wind farms. There is a growing demand in New England (and around country) for more clean energy and Maine is perfectly positioned to deliver this commodity to broader markets.

The Governor’s Energy Office’s “State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment” (“Report”) highlighted six different scenarios to reach Maine’s clean energy and climate goals. Each of these scenarios relied upon onshore wind in Aroostook County. But, in order to access Aroostook County wind, Maine needs to support the build out of its transmission infrastructure to reach this area. Without further support for transmission, these clean energy electrons have no place to go, and ISO-NE will not allow these projects to interconnect to their system.

These wind and transmission projects can take many years to study and develop and many more to permit and construct. Therefore, action is needed now in order for Maine to access these renewable resources before its projected shortfall in 2026.

Additionally, Congress is contemplating the passage of an investment tax credit that could reduce the cost of major transmission projects by 30 percent. There are dozens of proposals for major transmission projects across the country that are gearing up to take advantage of this federal financing support. LD 1710 would enable Maine to take advantage of this federal support, as well.

I hope that my testimony today encourages the committee to act swiftly to pass LD 1710 and bring these long-awaited economic development and clean energy opportunity to Maine.