



February 28, 2022

The Hon. Matthea Daughtry, Co-chair
The Hon. Mike Sylvester, Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Labor and Housing
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 1969, “*An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development*”

Dear Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee:

On behalf of Longroad Energy, I am writing to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1969, “An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development.”

Longroad develops solar and wind energy projects throughout the United States. We have 15 employees based in Portland and are developing several solar projects and one wind project in Maine. Over the past 15 years, the Longroad team has developed more renewable energy in the state than any other developer. Longroad’s national operations center is in our Portland office, from which our team of Maine Maritime Academy graduates and U.S. military veterans operates hundreds of renewable energy power plants across the country.

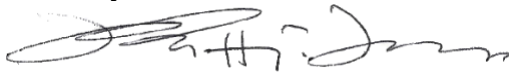
The Longroad team has significant experience in the construction of grid-scale renewable energy projects, having put nine Maine wind projects into service. We are also currently in the process of completing construction of four solar projects. Longroad has hired high-quality contracting firms to build these projects, and expects to do the same on future projects. Some of the work has been performed by contractors that employ union labor, and some of the work has been done by employee-owned firms. We have a preference for using Maine companies and workers. To meet the needs of our customers, it is necessary to employ a range of quality Maine companies and workers.

In light of the growth in solar in Maine and New England, there is a shortage of trained workers available to construct renewable energy projects. Rather than add restrictions that are likely to further limit the availability of Maine workers, the State could help by creating opportunities for citizens to get the skills necessary to get these jobs building a clean energy future. While we appreciate the bill’s inclusion of training and apprenticeship programs, it is not clear that the specific provisions in the bill will actually achieve this objective.

Finally, we have concerns about the applicability of the requirements in this bill. First, the bill only applies to renewable energy projects. Large parts of the energy sector in Maine – other parts of the electricity business, heating, and transportation – are not covered by the bill, nor is construction of any non-energy projects. Singling out clean energy for regulations that don't apply elsewhere would send a discouraging signal to those trying to attract investment to Maine to grow the economy and meet the state's climate and clean energy goals. Second, the bill appears to specifically cover bids submitted to the Public Utilities Commission as part of the ongoing Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program procurement.¹ In that process, transmission bids are being submitted right now, and generation bids will be finalized and submitted in a matter of weeks. Changing the requirements at this stage would undermine a fair, transparent, and competitive solicitation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew T. Kearns", written over a horizontal line.

Matthew T. Kearns
Chief Development Officer

¹ Established by P.L. 2021, Chapter 380, codified at 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I