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Support for LD 194

I urge immediate enactment of LD 194 for a number of reasons.

This legislation is designed to prevent Hydro Quebec- a business wholly owned by the Government of Quebec, from any action to persuade Maine residents to support its importation of electric power into Maine and on to the New England Electric Grid. Maine residents have a referendum approved for inclusion on the November ballot that would prohibit this importation. Forcing residents to endure merciless and misleading advertising by a company, wholly owned by the government of another country, places Maine residents on the defense just to exercise their American constitutional right. Quebec government (or any government) vs. people of Maine is a truly irregular contest, and should not be allowed by Maine law.

A second reason, aside from meddling in the affairs of Maine, is that, in this instance, the product being pedaled is of universal importance. It is also of the utmost importance for Hydro Quebec to sell electricity to New England to protect their citizens from higher electric rates caused by massive cost overruns in the construction of mega dams. HQ wants the New England market for one reason- cash. This expanded market for HQ is disastrous for New England as it in effect makes New England business subsidize their competing counterparts in Canada. Selling power in this region would create a situation where New England provides profit for HQ, allowing prices for Canadian customers to remain low.

A third reason is that, in this case, electric power generated from huge water impoundments has well documented negative environmental and social consequences. Allowing continued advertising of this product, creates the sense that Maine and New England are sanctioning these ongoing detrimental impacts.

It is also tremendously disheartening to see such support for this project from the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the Mid Maine Chamber of Commerce. For an organization such as the Chamber, in an era when social justice, environmental quality, and economic prosperity are so valued, one would think that producing electric power within our own country, providing jobs to American and Maine people would rank higher than 38 permanent jobs with this proposed powerline. Thirty-eight fresh jobs and hundreds lost in the biomass industry just so some business will save a few dollars. Actively supporting a huge net loss of jobs for rural Maine while making New England more dependent on Quebec for electricity is not a position the Chamber of Commerce can be proud of at all.

Hydro Quebec has had multiple opportunities to provide their story under oath, and they refused. For Maine, there is no positive side for this project. Hopes are high in Quebec that Maine lawmakers will continue to allow this endless barrage of advertising from across the border. Certainly, there is no positive effect of allowing a foreign government to challenge Maine residents with endless half- truth and misleading advertising. In 2018, Quebec banned such influence from presentation in their Province. It is time to enact a bit of fair trade. Please move LD 194 forward with all haste.

Sincerely

Bob Haynes, Skowhegan