



May 17, 2021

The Honorable Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
The Honorable Representative Seth Berry, Chair
And esteemed members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **LD 1710**, 'An Act to Require Prompt and Efficient use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine'.

Dear Members of the Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology,

I represent the Aroostook Partnership, a unique private-public partnership of nearly 100 businesses, the Northern Maine Development Commission and the four colleges in Aroostook County. The mission of the Partnership is, essentially, to grow Aroostook County's economy and support our residents, communities, and our quality of life.

I submit this testimony in **strong support of LD 1710** because it benefits rural Aroostook, Maine and the state's ambitious renewable energy generation goals. The positive impacts of passing and successfully implementing the objectives in the bill are numerous and would achieve substantial progress toward distributing renewable generation sources equitably across the state. In addition, Aroostook County has long been identified as an excellent location for grid scale renewable generation and transmission, and the region is eager to become a major exporter of renewable power. We have tried to do this for over two decades and this bill finally puts forth a commonsense approach to making it a reality. Some other benefits are:

- 1) Economically challenged areas of Aroostook County will have the opportunity for billions of dollars of capital investment, one of the most exciting and robust opportunities ever.
- 2) Thousands of construction jobs will be created over multiple project years.
- 3) Scores of long-term operations and maintenance jobs will be created on the transmission line as well as wind and solar farms and biomass plants.
- 4) Northern Maine Community College already stepped up to create a new Wind Technology program when Mars Hill Mountain was developed, and President Tim Crowley is eager to expand programs to further support clean energy jobs in Northern Maine. This will develop a stable pipeline of workers to help ensure these projects are a success across Maine.
- 5) The competition would be open to all kinds of renewable energy, including wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, energy storage and biomass – and it allows them to compete on a cost basis (rather than transmission basis).



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- 6) The bill unleashes the power of competition, particularly among transmission providers, to find the best routes and lowest-cost solutions.
- 7) For the transmission line, it gives preference to existing rights of way to avoid contentious land-use battles.
- 8) LD 1710 encourages the state to think long-term, by planning for the renewable energy resources that will best match up with the state's future grid and load requirements.
- 9) The ensuing projects promise to generate millions in economic benefits each year through jobs, payroll, state and local taxes.
- 10) The climate advantages are also critical and allows us to avoid millions of tons of planet-warming emissions each year.
- 11) This would advance the goals of the Governor, our Maine Climate Council and the State of Maine Renewable Energy Market Assessment.
- 12) People and businesses in Aroostook County have been hoping for exactly this kind of investment for decades – and with one fell swoop, Maine could make a quantum leap toward meeting both the 2030 and 2050 climate goals as well; would bring much needed investment to an economically and socially-vulnerable part of the state.

I appreciate that Senator Jackson and the bill cosponsors are pursuing more renewable procurements and applaud their effort to site them in the relatively untapped and well-suited Northern Maine region. As this committee continues to seek renewable generation expansion opportunities, it's great to see that projects are being sought in Northern Maine where land is more available, residents are generally more receptive to development, and developers stand ready to invest. Northern Maine welcomes this opportunity.

Respectfully,

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