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DAN BURGESS
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNOR'S
ENERGY OFFICE

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**Resolve, to Provide Legislative Approval of Northern Maine Transmission Infrastructure
L.D. 924**

**GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE
March 21, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Caroline Colan, and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

The GEO testifies in support of L.D. 924.

In 2021, the Legislature established the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program (35-A § 3210-I) through bipartisan legislation signed by Governor Mills. Pursuant to this legislation, the Public Utilities Commission selected two projects through a competitive bidding process to promote renewable energy development in northern Maine, finding them in the public interest and necessary to meet Maine's climate and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

As was highlighted in the GEO's Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment Report from 2021, developing renewable resources and associated transmission in northern Maine is a significant opportunity to meet Maine, and the region's, clean energy goals. Northern Maine possesses some of the highest quality renewable energy potential in the region, but has been unable to unlock that potential and the significant economic and community benefits that accompany it. These projects are poised to address these longstanding challenges and bring jobs, tax revenue, and economic opportunities to northern Maine.

In addition, the projects represent a key step toward achievement of our state's emissions reduction and renewable energy requirements. Maine households and businesses continue to confront volatile energy costs resulting from New England's longstanding overreliance on expensive, imported fossil fuels to heat our homes and businesses and generate our electricity. By bringing substantial new clean energy resources to Maine and our neighbors, these projects will not only help reduce energy costs over the long-term by placing downward pressure on regional electricity prices but will also help confront challenges from climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

When testifying in support of the original legislation in 2021, the GEO specifically mentioned the need to ensure regional coordination. Throughout the legislative and procurement process, the GEO has worked to support regional coordination, which is paramount to the success of these efforts.

We commend the Commission in its work to coordinate with our neighbors in Massachusetts to advance this project and provide substantial regional benefits across the New England electricity grid.

With innovative and bold initiatives like this, Maine can continue to demonstrate our leadership and commitment to a clean, affordable, reliable energy future.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Colan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Caroline Colan, Legislative Liaison
Governor's Energy Office