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An Act To Require Impact Statements from Potential Purchasers of Public Utilities and Those Who Apply To Extract Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §58 is enacted to read:

§ 58. Impact statements

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Authorizing agency" means any department, agency or body of State Government that is authorized by law to issue a lease, permit or license for the extraction of natural resources or to approve the transfer of ownership of a public utility.

B. "Public utility" means any transmission and distribution utility, water utility or gas utility that is subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission.

2. Prohibition. An authorizing agency may not authorize the transfer of ownership of a public utility or issue a lease, permit or license to commercially extract natural resources unless it complies with this section.

3. Impact statement required. Prior to authorizing the transfer of ownership of a public utility or issuing a lease, permit or license to commercially extract a natural resource, including but not limited to marine and timber resources, from public lands or waters of the State, an authorizing agency shall require an applicant to submit an impact statement that includes an analysis of:

A. The economic benefits and effects of the transfer, lease, permit or license;

B. The environmental impacts of the transfer, lease, permit or license;

C. The impact the transfer, lease, permit or license will have on employment in the State; and

D. The impact the transfer, lease, permit or license will have on the State's infrastructure, including roads, bridges and wharves.

SUMMARY

This bill requires that an impact statement be submitted prior to the transfer of ownership of a public utility or the issuance of a lease, permit or license to commercially extract natural resources.