

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

S.P. 574 - L.D. 1456

**Resolve, to Study the Effect of Current Laws and Rules on the Expansion of  
Broadband**

**Sec. 1. Public Utilities Commission study. Resolved:** That the Public Utilities Commission, in consultation with the Maine Connectivity Authority, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 9404, shall study current pole attachment laws and rules and the effects of those laws and rules on broadband expansion through public networks, private networks or public-private partnerships. The study must incorporate input and analysis from the Interagency Broadband Working Group, which is a working group led by the Maine Connectivity Authority, and include:

1. An examination of the average time involved for each stage of pole make-ready work, as defined in Title 35-A, section 2524, subsection 1, paragraph A, including the time for joint use pole owners to approve new attachments for tax-exempt municipalities and private companies, and ways to decrease or standardize wait times for attachments;
2. Using readily available information to the extent possible, including pole data that may be available in the electronic pole attachment management system, an estimate of the number of utility poles statewide that could accommodate municipal facility attachments without the need to replace the pole and an assessment of compliance with Title 35-A, section 2524, subsection 2;
3. An assessment of the effectiveness of the commission's enforcement practices for timely relocation or removal of utility poles that are functionally obsolete, that are in violation of requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or that obstruct current or future municipal infrastructure; and
4. A review of the commission's current educational resources regarding the rights of municipalities and other entities to attach to shared-use poles and the availability of the commission's dispute resolution process, including the effectiveness of such resources.

By February 15, 2024, the commission shall submit an initial report to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology describing the findings of the commission and the commission's progress toward addressing each of the elements of the study and any recommendations, including proposed legislation, resulting from the study. After reviewing the initial report, the joint standing committee may report out a bill relating

to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature. By December 1, 2024, the commission shall submit a final report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utility matters including findings and any recommendations, including proposed legislation, resulting from the study. After reviewing the final report, the committee may report out a bill to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.