



Maine Municipal Association

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Provisional Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 1587 – *An Act To Remove the Municipal Ordinance Exemption for the Development of Nonessential Transmission Lines* May 4, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Neal Goldberg, and I am providing provisional testimony neither for nor against LD 1587 on behalf of MMA. Amended testimony will be provided if the comments offered today do not align with the Legislative Policy Committee's official position.

This bill aims to limit the extent to which the Public Utilities Commission can overlook the interest of a community when it comes to nonessential transmission lines that do not create positive results at the local level. LD 1587 specifically targets transmission lines that originate outside of the state and do not primarily provide service to retail customers within the state.

The initial construction of transmission lines is very intrusive to communities and after installation they remain an eyesore that local officials are powerless to remedy. The presence of transmission lines can impact property values and thus diminish property tax revenues. Residents are also concerned with the unknown side-effects of living nearby powerful transmission lines. The developments also divide habitats which can have significant consequences for the environment and wildlife. Since nonessential transmission lines have such dramatic and lasting impacts on municipalities, they should have a say in the matter before their fate is sealed.

Maine, along with the rest of country, is looking for sources of renewable energy to mitigate climate change and create carbon neutral states. To make efficient progress, the Public Utilities Commission should differentiate between proposed developments that benefit Maine residents and those that benefit parties outside of the state. If the commission determines the construction of transmission lines in the backyards of Maine residents does not advance the state's clean energy goals and primarily serves rate-payers in other states, the commission should not be able to overlook municipal ordinances.

Considering the marginal benefit nonessential transmission lines provide residents, it seems appropriate to remove the municipal ordinance exemption for these types of developments.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.