



February 20, 2024

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair
The Hon. Stanley Paige Zeigler, Jr., Co-chair
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 2205, “Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program”

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Zeigler, and members of the EUT Committee:

On behalf of Longroad Energy (Longroad), I am writing in opposition to L.D. 2205, “Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.”

Longroad develops and operates wind and solar energy projects in markets across the United States. In our Scarborough office, we employ a dozen people including Maine Maritime Academy graduates and U.S. military veterans who operate hundreds of renewable energy power plants across the country from a control room staffed around-the-clock. The Longroad team has been developing renewable energy projects in Maine for over 15 years, and during that time, we have invested over a billion dollars in the process of developing approximately 700 megawatts (MW) of clean energy here in the state.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) issued a request for proposals (RFP) in November 2021 pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development statute that was developed by the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee during the 130th Legislature. Longroad submitted a bid for its King Pine Wind project in the energy supply portion of that RFP process in May 2022, which was selected by the PUC in October 2022. In response to encouragement by the PUC, Longroad worked to engage Massachusetts in this process, which led to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources deciding to partner with Maine in late 2022. Subsequently, the PUC determined that a 60/40 split between Maine and Massachusetts was in the public interest and approved term sheets with Longroad for King Pine Wind and with LS Power for a transmission line.

In December, the PUC terminated this procurement process and indicated an intent to initiate a new procurement to implement the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development statute.

Longroad supports taking steps to make improvements to the procurement process, including the anticipated PUC process to solicit stakeholder feedback and Senator Jackson's bill, L.D. 1963. We also do not object to the concept of further evaluation of means to successfully develop a transmission line under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development program. However, we have significant concerns with the approach proposed in L.D. 2205, especially the very lengthy and unnecessary delay it would mandate.

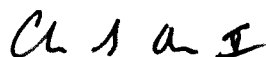
Section 6 of L.D. 2205 would prohibit the PUC from implementing the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development program for over two years. Such a delay could effectively terminate the program, as it could cause cost increases for ratepayers, reduce competition in the procurement process, and risk Massachusetts' interest in purchasing from and bearing a substantial portion of the cost of this program.

The proposed scope of study and results in this bill are already key provisions included in existing review and approval processes, including the need for projects to acquire a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), in addition to local, state, and federal permitting. Throughout all of these processes, there is ample opportunity for public input.

King Pine Wind will produce electricity at a cost below the market rate for power and unlock significant economic benefits for Northern Maine. Furthermore, the project is important to achieving the state's climate goals, reducing Maine's reliance on expensive and volatile fossil fuels, and developing transmission between Aroostook County and the U.S. electric grid. Accordingly, we urge the committee to reject postponing implementation of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development program.

Thanks for the opportunity to share our concerns about this bill.

Sincerely,



Chad Allen
Director of Development
Longroad Energy Holdings, LLC