



May 12, 2009

Senator Philip L. Bartlett, II, Chair
Senator Barry Hobbins, Chair
Representative John L. Martin, Chair
Representative Jon Hinck, Chair
Joint Select Committees on
Maine Energy Futures and Utilities and Energy

Re: Transmission Projects

Dear Senators Bartlett and Hobbins, Representatives Martin and Hinck:

Governor Baldacci created the Ocean Energy Task Force by Executive Order in November 2008. The OETF has been meeting monthly to discuss how to move ocean renewable energy projects forward in the Gulf of Maine as expeditiously as possible, while doing so in an environmentally responsible manner. The Governor has introduced L.D. 1465, which establishes a streamlined general permit for the testing and demonstration of new renewable ocean energy technologies in areas that will be identified by mid-December. We understand that you are considering transmission-related legislation that could have an impact on the future viability of renewable energy in Maine.

The Task Force recognizes the urgency of its charge. Maine depends more heavily on heating oil than any other state (80 percent), and our transportation network is 100 percent dependent on oil. The percent of the average Maine family's budget that is spent on energy is growing, and 90% of these expenditures are for heat and transport. Had oil prices remained at the \$4 to \$5 level, this past winter would have been a calamity. We also recognize the urgency of addressing our dependence on imported oil for national security purposes, and to address global warming.

The Gulf of Maine hosts a vast wind resource, projected at well over 100 gigawatts. The OETF envisions a day when these winds will be used not only to provide power for our lights and computers, but also to heat our homes and power our vehicles. Many things must happen to make this vision a reality and the task force and its subcommittees are working on a number of fronts to address the challenges before us.

MEMBERS:

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|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| • Rep. Herb Adams | • Tim Agnew | • George Baker | • Prof. Habib Dagher | • Rep. Stacey Fitts |
| • David Flanagan | • W. Parker Hadlock | • Leslie A. Harroun | • George Hart | • Sen. Barry Hobbins |
| • John Kerry | • August S. King, Jr. | • George Lapointe | • Kathleen Leyden | • Sean Mahoney |
| • Robert Marvinney | • Pat McGowan | • Beth Nagusky | • Don Perkins | • Sen. Kevin Raye |
| • Cathy Renault | • Pat White | (co-chair) | (co-chair) | |

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One of those challenges is building and maintaining a robust and reliable transmission and distribution grid that can handle significant new capacity from Maine's intermittent renewable resources and deliver it to end users seamlessly. At present, Maine's transmission and distribution capacity is inadequate to meet even the state's near-term, much less our longer term, goals. We are looking at what kinds of technologies—and what kinds of grid upgrades—will be needed to handle the new demand that will arise from using renewable energy for heat and transport, particularly from Maine's renewable offshore energy resources.

The OETF understands that efforts are underway at the Legislature that could restrict new transmission and/or transmission upgrades that are currently under consideration. We would like to express the view of the Ocean Energy Task Force that placing roadblocks in front of transmission reliability and capacity increase projects that will help integrate Maine's renewable energy resources, especially our ocean renewable energy resources, into the regional transmission grid runs contrary to the State's goal of adding significant new renewable energy capacity -- 3,000 megawatts of new wind capacity by 2020, at least 300 of which is to come from offshore wind.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Don Perkins
President, Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Co-chair, Governor's Ocean Energy Task Force

Beth Nagusky
Director, Office of Innovation and Assistance, Maine DEP
Co-chair, Governor's Ocean Energy Task Force

cc: Members, Joint Standing Committees on Maine Energy Futures and
Utilities and Energy