

THE STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

APPLICATION FOR SITE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACT PERMIT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT PERMIT
FOR THE NEW ENGLAND CLEAN ENERGY CONNECT
FROM QUÉBEC-MAINE BORDER TO LEWISTON
AND RELATED NETWORK UPGRADES

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

MATT WAGNER

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

TESTIMONY OF MATT WAGNER

1 **Please state your name and address.**

2 My name is Matt Wagner. I live at 29 Kenney Road in Knox, Maine. I am also a land
3 owner and tax payer in The Forks, Maine where I live as a seasonal resident.

4 **What is the name of your organization and business address?**

5 I am writing on behalf of myself, my wife and my children in the interest of our
6 common future.

7 **What is your current position?**

8 I am the Operations Manager and Co-Owner of InSource Renewables.

9 **What other occupations have you had in the greater Forks area?**

10 I am a Registered Maine Whitewater Guide and previously worked as a commercial
11 guide and trip leader on day trips and overnight trips.

12 **Why did you intervene in these proceedings?**

13 I intervened due to CMP's clear intent to the abuse of process. I am opposed to the
14 clearing and construction of the proposed line for several reasons, which I will list
15 below. As a family we have spent over twenty years hiking, biking, fishing, hunting,
16 caving, rafting, and guiding in the Enchanted Forest and surrounding area. While we
17 no longer live in the area, we now own a camp there and bring our children there at
18 least every other weekend throughout the year. This is the area I consider my home.
19 As former residents and guides we've lived on both sides of the recreation industry
20 we now support. Please carefully consider the dramatic reshaping of this critical
21 area's future in your permitting process. Thanks for taking a moment to consider my
22 objections as you decide the future of the area.

1 In public presentations CMP has repeatedly perpetuated the notion that the area
2 where a new corridor is to be built is a degraded or otherwise previously destroyed
3 industrial forest. While industrial forestry has certainly left its mark, it HAS NOT
4 permanently fragmented one of the last remaining contiguous forests east of the
5 Mississippi River, which is exactly what this project would do. Logging roads that
6 were once 40 feet wide have receded back into barely passable jeep trails in my
7 lifetime. Allowing a transmission line through this area is a massive shift towards an
8 industrial landscape, not the working forest that we've long since come to terms
9 with.

10 As a lifelong outdoorsperson and conservationist, I can attest to some of the great
11 work that's already been done by conservation organizations to protect this area. The
12 MBPL lands on the southern slope of Coburn Mountain go largely unvisited but are
13 an amazing unsung asset to the region. The Cold Stream conservation area attracts
14 fisherman from all over the world as one of the greatest brook trout habitats in New
15 England and is known to be the spawning ground for many of the brook trout in the
16 Upper Kennebec River. The Nature Conservancy's protection of the land
17 surrounding and including #5 Mountain is without parallel. NECEC threatens all
18 these places with permanent development, habitat fragmentation, viewshed loss, and
19 insufficient setbacks from streams that harbor some of the countries last remaining
20 brook trout fisheries.

21 There are alternatives. This line doesn't need to transect this area. This project has
22 been selected to save non-Maine ratepayers money over more viable and less

1 ecologically menacing options. In a recent public hearing CMP's own representative
2 admitted that this line may only be economically feasible for 20-40 years as non-
3 transmission alternatives such as solar gain ground.

4 No economic impact study has been done to show the potential impact on this area
5 though a soft package has been offered by CMP to some of the rafting companies
6 through a private arrangement that promises around 20 million in mitigation
7 revenues to be paid to the supporters of the project. I'm certain the French would
8 give us our 15 million back for the Louisiana Purchase in a heartbeat. The
9 shortsightedness of this arrangement is staggering.

10 As an aside from the soon to be realized economic costs and ecological concerns, I
11 have a very human concern that's at the heart of why this project should suffer a
12 quick rebuke. It's intangible, and I'll share it with you with an anecdote. I once took
13 a young group of Boy Scouts from southern New England down the Kennebec on a
14 raft trip. It's a day that I know changed their lives and how they view the natural
15 world forever. During our trip, a bald eagle was attempting to rob the young from an
16 osprey nest that hung over the river, not far from the proposed NECEC crossing. I
17 pulled the boat to shore and we watched for nearly an hour as the osprey and eagle
18 battled, diving, soaring, striking each other, and screeching loudly as they wheeled
19 around us. Later that night the scout master told me that many of the kids in other
20 boats that day had had a blast on the river, but that the kids that had gotten to see the
21 great birds battling had been given something much greater and that they were
22 quieter that night as they thought about their day. I hope some of them still carry that
23 experience with them. Their experience that day couldn't have been had by lifelong

1 effort. I'm certain that while many of them may not come back to experience the
2 wildness of the area, that the idea of it, that knowing that wild places still exist, and
3 that they can go there and leave the entanglements of modern life behind, is as
4 critical to them today as it is to those of us who venture there regularly. There aren't
5 many of these places left that are accessible to regular people on the east coast. A
6 day on the river for many is a chance to re-find that bond with wildness. It doesn't
7 matter that beyond the buffer lays a working forest that they can't see.

8 A lot of great work has been done to protect this experience, whether it's at the top of
9 Enchanted Mountain, riding a raft on the Kennebec Gorge, or casting a fly to a rising
10 trout on Cold Stream. I urge you on behalf of all who find rejuvenation in wildness
11 to deny the application to bisect this wild and scenic area with a transmission
12 corridor.

Date:

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____

Print Name: Matthew Wagner

Matthew S. Wagner

STATE OF Maine
COUNTY OF Somerset

Personally appeared before me the above- named Matthew Wagner, who being duly sworn, did testify that the foregoing testimony was true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Before me,

Michelle Hopkins

Notary Public/ Attorney

My Commission expires

