

Maine Department of Energy Resources Transmission Planning Stakeholder Group Meeting #6 Pursuant to Resolves 2025, Ch. 57 August 5, 2026 | Meeting Summary

Meeting in Brief

Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER), formerly the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), convened the sixth meeting of the Transmission Planning Stakeholder Group to provide final updates regarding Maine's transmission efforts and the Study Regarding the Future of Electric Transmission Infrastructure in the State. Ten (10) members of the stakeholder group defined in Resolve 2025, Ch. 57, and approximately twenty-two (22) other interested parties participated. This final meeting focused on providing an overview of the full draft report with emphasis on how Stakeholder Group conversations shaped it, as well as a structured open discussion to solicit Stakeholder reflections on the draft report and any next steps for Maine's consideration once the study is complete.

The following meeting summary provides a brief overview of the presentation, along with participants' questions and comments. A list of the Stakeholder Group members in attendance is attached to this document. Presentation slides are available [here](#).¹

Context and Updates

Celina Cunningham, DOER, welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the Transmission Study process. She reminded participants of Resolve 2025, ch. 57's requirements, which mandate a report to the Legislature by September 1, 2026. Celina then thanked everyone for joining the meeting and for their continued participation throughout the Stakeholder Group process, which started in December 2025. She also provided brief updates on three transmission projects underway in Maine and directed participants to visit DOER's website for more details on their progress. Celina reminded the group that the comment period for the draft report would be open until August 17th, 2026. For more information on the Stakeholder Group meetings, please click [here](#).

Overview Presentation on Maine Transmission Infrastructure Study Draft

Ben Joseph, E3, provided participants with a brief reminder of what the Stakeholder Group process entailed up to the present meeting. He reviewed the arc of meetings held and underscored that each subject-area meeting was based upon the topics delineated in the Resolve. Following this, Ben shared the draft report's table of contents to illustrate how the Stakeholder Group shaped the draft report's structure and contents. He also detailed the various pieces of

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/energy/opportunities/public-meetings/transmission-stakeholder-group-meeting-5-tue-jun-2-2026-12-2pm>

feedback that were provided and shared the themes across each type, and thanked the group for their participation and insights. Ben also provided some details around the targeted discussion raised regarding undergrounding in a previous meeting, and shared that, as a result, E3 will be adding to the report additional considerations that lead to strategic undergrounding and cost-benefit considerations.

Stakeholders' questions and comments following this presentation are summarized in the respective section below.

All slides are available [here](#).

Stakeholder Group Input & Questions

Stakeholder group members' questions and comments following each presentation are summarized below. Responses from E3, DOER, or other state organizations are italicized in sub-order bullets.

What are your reflections on the final draft report?

- A stakeholder group member asked E3 to speak to the prospects of undergrounding in Maine given the state's geology.
 - *E3: Shallow bedrock in Maine is likely to make undergrounding higher cost than in the Midwest, where trenching to a reasonable depth is easier. Additionally, projects mentioned in the report, including CHPE and CleanPath, include underground, submarine, and above ground segments, which makes it difficult to isolate just the undergrounding costs. A route requiring full undergrounding would be high-cost and time-intensive. The case studies in the report highlight very different applications: one in Virginia is entirely underground HVDC, while one in California involves only a small undergrounded segment at a high premium that nonetheless provided benefits by avoiding strict barriers. Both can be the right approach in different settings.*
- A stakeholder group member underscored concerns that typical cost / benefit analysis of transmission projects don't include costs related to any change in property values, as well as other costs.
- The stakeholder emphasized the need for a comprehensive long-term study to determine the future of transmission in Maine, identifying what the state's grid should look like in 2050, and how to get there in the most collectively cost-effective way rather than planning each line individually.

What would be helpful next steps for Maine once the study is complete?

Stakeholder group members made no additional comments.

Elected Officials Input & Questions

Elected officials' questions and comments are summarized below.

What are your reflections on the final draft report?

- One elected state official asked whether the Minnesota state study included states beyond Minnesota.
 - *E3: The referenced study covered multiple states across the Midwest. E3 also looked into more recent PJM data, but those comparisons were not apples-to-apples, as they focused on upgrades to existing infrastructure.*
- The elected official also asked whether there was a possibility to incorporate right-of-way co-location in certain areas, given that costs appeared near those of traditional transmission lines.
 - *E3: The report explores and documents relevant considerations for co-location.*
- The same elected official also asked about property acquisition costs for undergrounding compared to overhead, including that of eminent domain.
 - *E3: A narrower right-of-way for underground lines would likely have lower property costs, and those costs are factored into overall project cost estimates. However, generally the property cost savings are not enough on their own to make underground cost-competitive with overhead. E3's report is intended to share helpful considerations, not to evaluate specific corridors.*
 - *DOER: The report is designed to help understand the key considerations and tradeoffs for undergrounding versus overhead. The quantitative comparison is based on the best available national data, and it does not include site-specific engineering analysis.*

What would be helpful next steps for Maine once the study is complete?

- A state elected official noted that effective engagement helps to surface less quantifiable, but important impacts.
- Another state elected official suggested that it would be helpful to develop a guide or roadmap to document a structured routing and screening process. The elected official also recommended distinguishing between known needs (e.g., asset replacement, reliability issues, etc.) and more speculative needs that would benefit from scenario analysis. In particular, by incorporating this distinction into how needs cases are modeled.

Other Interested Parties Input & Questions

Other interested parties' questions and comments are summarized below.

- A participant noted that the draft report suggests overhead transmission lines can negatively impact property values in rural areas by a significant amount, and asked whether this should be factored into the cost-benefit calculation of overhead versus underground, particularly in rural areas.
 - *E3: The report comments on these considerations but does not undertake the site-specific, comprehensive analysis needed to evaluate them in the context of any particular transmission line. E3 is offering considerations for future work. Cost-benefit analysis for transmission is generally undertaken from the ratepayer*

perspective, and would not include change in property values in either costs or benefits to ratepayers.

- A participant asked about the costs of offshore HVDC from Maine to Southern New England.
 - *DOER: This study did not examine this specific project concept.*
- A participant asked whether the cost analysis of overhead versus underground lines considered risks from extreme weather, such as more frequent wildfires, extreme temperatures, and high-wind events, which could impose higher repair, maintenance, and rebuilding costs on overhead lines.
 - *E3: The report incorporates these considerations.*
- A participant emphasized the need to balance the local environmental and social impacts of transmission with the consequences of not building needed infrastructure. The participant noted that undergrounding will be necessary in some places but not others, and that a snapshot in time today will not capture where the state needs to be in 50 years. Continued collaboration and responsiveness to changing technology will be required.
- A participant raised an equity concern about property value impacts driving undergrounding decisions. They noted a perception that lower property values in rural areas could lead to justifying overhead lines there, while undergrounding remains reserved for wealthier areas with higher property values. Since transmission costs are allocated to *all* ratepayers, this dynamic could increase costs for everyone and only benefit wealthier communities.

Stakeholder Group Participants

Anna Henderson

Celina Cunningham

Craig Nale

David Norman

Francis Pullaro

Heath Cowan

Melanie Loyzim

Michael Haskell

Stacy Benjamin

Tanya Blanchard

Elected Officials

Senator Scott Cyrway, Maine State Senate

Representative Gerry Runte, Maine House of Representatives