

Maine Department of Energy Resources

Transmission Planning Stakeholder Group Meeting #4

Pursuant to Resolves 2025, Ch. 57

June 2, 2026 | Meeting Summary

Meeting in Brief

Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER), formerly the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), convened the fifth meeting of the Transmission Planning Stakeholder Group to provide updates and context surrounding Maine's transmission efforts and the Study Regarding the Future of Electric Transmission Infrastructure in the State. Fourteen (14) members of the stakeholder group defined in Resolve 2025, Ch. 57, and approximately twenty-two (22) other interested parties participated. The meeting focused on the colocation of electric transmission infrastructure within existing rights-of-way, as well as a cost-benefit review of strategic ungrounding and various line types.

The following meeting summary provides a brief overview of the presentations, 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 gave an overview of the Transmission Study process. She reminded participants of Resolve 2025, ch. 57's requirements, which mandate a report and recommendations to the Legislature in September 2026. Celina then provided a summary of Stakeholder Group Meeting No. 4 that took place in May 2026, and invited participants to review materials from previous meetings. She also highlighted that DOER would be holding its final Stakeholder Group meeting in August 2026, again for a total of six (6). Celina shared that this fifth meeting would be the final meeting to focus on the topics of [the Resolve](#). She also underscored that DOER would continue to welcome input and continued conversation around these Resolve topics to inform the drafting of the Report until June 16th, 2026. She also reiterated that the final meeting, in August, would focus on the draft study report, which would be sent out to the Stakeholder Group for their initial review in advance. Further, Celina clarified there would be opportunity after the final meeting for response and input as well. For more information on the Stakeholder Group meetings, please click [here](#).

Presentation on Colocation with Rights-of-Way (ROW)

Corey Hull, The Ray, provided an overview of different strategies for future consideration regarding colocation with existing rights-of-way for electric transmission. The presentation examined policy, infrastructure, and operational considerations for transmission colocation in roadway and railway ROWs. The Ray concluded by presenting potential cost-effective next steps

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

and strategies for considering legal and policy opportunities for co-location.

Stakeholders' questions and comments following this presentation are summarized in the respective section below. All slides are available [here](#).

Presentation on Cost-Benefit Review of Strategic Undergrounding and Different Line Types

Ben Joseph, E3, reviewed the benefits, barriers, and costs of strategic undergrounding and different line types. E3 focused on sharing illustrative steps that might be applied towards identifying potential opportunities for strategic undergrounding. They underscored that this is not, in and of itself, a “silver bullet” and that robust, specific studies with relevant data would be essential to support informed decision-making.

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, The Ray, DOER, or other state organizations are italicized in suborder bullets.

Colocation in Rights of Way

- A stakeholder asked what the single most impactful step would be to reduce friction around co-location.
 - *The Ray: Minnesota started an informal, legislative-driven working group to bring state agencies together and build consensus early, before involving utilities.*
 - *Maine DOT: We appreciated the opportunity to provide input early in the development of The Ray's presentation. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for ROW given the range of roadway widths, classifications, and access types. DOT is bound by its legislatively approved Utility Accommodation Rules (UAR), but if there are provisions that could be improved they can be discussed with the DOT engineering council.*
- A stakeholder asked whether co-location requires extra transmission line length.
 - *The Ray: Generally developers want to avoid extra length because it adds cost. In practice, developers typically use transportation corridors for short stretches where it makes sense and otherwise return to dedicated corridors, seeking the shortest or otherwise most appropriate overall path.*
 - *Maine DOT: Guardrails and shielding are themselves hazards, so any infrastructure placed in the clear zone needs to be introduced strategically, given proximity to the traveling public.*
- A stakeholder asked how costs compare between building in a transportation corridor, greenfield, and existing undeveloped ROW.

- *The Ray: Apples-to-apples analysis typically needs to focus on a specific case, as there are many significant variables to consider. Costs involve tradeoffs between private landowner easements and DOT fees negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The primary driver is often making siting feasible (i.e., balancing cost, environmental considerations, and other factors) rather than purely reducing cost.*
- *Maine DOT: Conditions are unique to every road and corridor, and developers may need to move in and out of ROW depending on existing layouts.*
- A stakeholder asked about the maintenance of co-located transmission lines.
 - *Maine DOT: Maintenance may require access from abutting properties and road closures with specific timeframe requirements. These challenges are not insurmountable but need to be anticipated. Maine is also legislatively bound not to spend transportation dollars on utilities. However, DOT can accommodate utilities when acquiring ROW for a transportation project.*
- DOER asked whether visual impacts are part of the decision-making process for co-location.
 - *Maine DOT: DOT is not regulatory in that way, other than for I-95. Aesthetic issues are discussed at the project team level with designers, environmental specialists, and the town.*
- A stakeholder underscored that co-location is not a silver bullet, noting that the issues discussed already exist at the current scale and that utilities deal with them daily.

Cost-benefit review of strategic undergrounding and different line types

- A stakeholder noted that some studies indicated a property value diminishment of 18–45%, compared to the study reporting 5–25% referenced by E3 in their presentation, and requested that these two studies be compared.
 - *E3: We will link to the referenced study in the slides and welcome considering this one as well.*
- A stakeholder raised equity concerns, observing that undergrounding appears to show a net benefit in high-property-value areas, and asked about the implications if lower-income areas with lower property values receive overhead lines while higher-income areas with higher property values receive underground.
 - *E3: Developing quantification methodologies that reflect all priorities and capture equity considerations will require tailoring to the specific jurisdiction's needs. Cost-benefit analysis for undergrounding would not be complete if only comparing estimated impact on abutting or nearby property values with costs of building transmission.*
 - *PUC: For regional transmission, if undergrounding costs are higher, those costs are borne by ratepayers of the local utility, not the entire region. ISO-NE evaluates both cost and aesthetic effect.*
- A stakeholder raised concerns about downstream cost impacts, noting that increases in transmission costs affect interconnection costs for renewables, and emphasized the policy considerations around what the state is trying to incentivize.

Reflections on Transmission Stakeholder Group Engagement Process

Stakeholder group members were asked to share their reflections on the Transmission Stakeholder group engagement process to date. Members broadly expressed appreciation for the process itself, noting that it had been comprehensive and surfaced new information across the numerous topics discussed. Several specifically shared the value of hearing perspectives beyond their own areas of expertise. One member also observed that the transmission processes in Maine and New England are somewhat disjointed, with relevant parties not necessarily communicating as comprehensively as they could. Someone else expressed cautious optimism while reiterating that any future project needs to be done right “the first time.” Another member emphasized that the most important outcome is getting the information to consumers and communities in a useful, understandable way (i.e., not just through a report or legislative process); they underscored the importance of intentional efforts to explain how Mainers can provide meaningful feedback.

Other Interested Parties Input & Questions

Other interested parties’ questions and comments are summarized below.

- A participant asked whether E3 has examined the recent Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPPE) HVDC project and its costs and benefits.
 - *E3: This is a good example of many topics discussed as most of the CHPPE underground portion runs along the railway and roadway ROW. The line was recently energized, but there is no real-world performance data yet. It is also difficult to reverse-engineer the incremental costs and benefits.*
- A participant asked whether E3 has examined the ISO-NE LTTP bids, particularly comparing onshore HVAC overhead bids with hybrid onshore HVAC and offshore HVDC undersea bids.
 - *E3: We have not examined these bids as part of this study.*
- A participant asked whether directional drilling has been considered for longer sections of undergrounding.
 - *E3: Trenching is the predominant method. Directional drilling is useful for getting around obstacles, but it is slower and more costly.*

Stakeholder Group Participants

Amalia Siegel
Anna Henderson
Anthony Hourihan
Celina Cunningham
Craig Nale
Dwayne Conley
Francis Pullaro
Heath Cowan
John Perry
Melanie Loyzim
Michael Duguay
Michael Haskell
Susan Chamberlin
Tanya Blanchard