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Testimony Neither For Nor Against
LD 1458, “An Act Regarding Compensation Fees and Related Conservation Efforts
for Solar and Wind Energy Development and High-impact Electric Transmission
Lines Under the Site Location of Development Laws”
April 14, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Heather Sanborn, here today as Public Advocate, to testify in neither for nor against LD 1458, “An Act Regarding Compensation Fees and Related Conservation Efforts for Solar and Wind Energy Development and High-impact Electric Transmission Lines Under the Site Location of Development Laws.”

I am here today on behalf of Maine’s utility ratepayers to simply remind the committee that, when it comes to transmission lines and renewable energy development, fees imposed on developers are ultimately paid by Mainers on our electricity bills. Developers add the assessments into their calculation of the return necessary to finance a project. Large fees make financing projects more difficult and more costly, potentially discouraging needed investment and raising the ultimate prices paid by ratepayers. Therefore, the fee structure must strike a balance between allowing for project development that supports the state greenhouse gas reduction goals and allows for a reliable and safe electricity grid, while also providing appropriate remediation for resulting negative environmental impacts.

As you consider both the Department’s major substantive rule in Chapter 375 and this piece of legislation, I encourage you to keep in mind that substantial new generation and transmission **will** need to be built in Maine over the coming decades. Impact fees can be useful if they steer this development to locations where it will have the least adverse impact on our environment. But, ultimately, all extra fees imposed on energy development will inevitably be paid by Mainers who are already struggling to afford their electricity bills.

I welcome your questions and would be pleased to provide additional information for the work session.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sanborn
Public Advocate