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Maine OPA Files Federal Complaint Against Eversource X-178 Transmission Project

May 12, 2026 | HALLOWELL – On May 12, the Maine Office of the Public Advocate (“OPA”) filed a complaint with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission against Eversource Energy Service Company (Eversource) regarding the proposed X-178 transmission project. The complaint argues that Eversource failed to follow existing tariff requirements by mischaracterizing the project as necessary for management of “damaged or destroyed” facilities. The complaint argues that if the current tariff provides no process for reviewing such a mischaracterization by the transmission owner, then the tariff is unreasonable.

The X-178 project involves the reconstruction of 49 miles of transmission facilities through the White Mountains in northern New Hampshire at an estimated cost to New England ratepayers of \$360 million. This project would involve replacing approximately 580 poles despite an analysis by Eversource itself indicating that only 41 poles were currently in need of replacement. The costs of such projects are borne by ratepayers across the New England region in proportion to each region’s electricity usage.

The X-178 project is proposed as an “asset condition project,” where a transmission line owner replaces “damaged or destroyed” infrastructure with new poles and lines. Eversource sought input from stakeholders through the ISO New England Planning Advisory Committee. However, under ISO New England’s practices, Eversource is permitted to move forward with the project regardless of stakeholder concerns simply because Eversource has characterized the project as an asset condition project.

“By Eversource’s own admission, fewer than 10% of the poles involved in this project are in need of replacement,” explained Heather Sanborn, Maine’s Public Advocate. “Eversource appears to be shoehorning the full rebuild of non-damaged transmission assets into the ‘asset condition project’ designation to avoid the scrutiny other projects qualifying for regional cost allocation must satisfy. That will directly cost Mainers more money because there is no meaningful check on Eversource’s plans.”

The complaint is filed under Sections 306 and 206 of the Federal Power Act. Section 306 allows complaints for failure of a utility to comply with its own tariffs. Section 206 allows complaints for unreasonable practices of a utility.

The OPA was joined in its complaint by the Vermont Department of Public Service, the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel, the Rhode Island Department of Public Utilities and Carriers, and the New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate.