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William S. Harwood
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

**Testimony Neither For nor Against
LD 2205, “Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a
Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for
Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine
Renewable Energy Development Program”**

February 20, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is William Harwood, here today as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 2205, “Resolve, to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Initiate a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Transmission Technologies and Siting Locations for Any Future Electric Transmission Line Proposed Pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.”

The OPA supports the provisions of the bill that require the PUC to carefully consider all the economic, environmental, scenic, public health and safety impacts of the proposed transmission line. However, we propose that this be done in coordination with the Commission’s required review of the project in a future Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) proceeding. This will allow the PUC to move forward with re-bidding the project over the next few months and then, once the winning bidder is determined, to carefully consider the best location for the transmission line to connect the proposed wind farm in Aroostook County with the ISO-NE transmission system. Although it is important to carefully consider the potential impacts of the proposed line, we should not let the process unreasonably delay reaching a conclusion whether to issue the necessary permits for the project to go forward. A significant delay of a project such as this could damage our critically important ongoing efforts to cost effectively meet our climate goals.



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Accordingly, I would amend Sections 4 and 5 to leave the exact timing of the study to the PUC and delete Section 6.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 2205 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Harwood".

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate