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PUBLIC ADVOCATE

**Testimony In Support of
LD 924, “Resolve, to Provide Legislative Approval of Northern Maine Transmission
Infrastructure”
March 21, 2023**

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

My name is William Harwood and I am the Public Advocate, here today to testify in support of LD 924, “Resolve, to Provide Legislative Approval of Northern Maine Transmission Infrastructure.”

The OPA supports the bill and recognize the importance of the proposed project toward meeting our climate goals.

On January 30, 2023, the OPA submitted a letter (attached) in Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket No. 2021-00369 in support of competitive bidding for projects associated with the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program. In the letter, the Office states, “...OPA has consistently advocated for the need to aggressively and cost effectively make a clean energy transition to help mitigate the harmful effects on Maine residents due to price swings caused by our overreliance on fossil fuels. We believe one way to accomplish that goal is through competitive bidding in order to bring more grid-scale renewables online.”

However, the timing and circumstances dictated by this new requirement for legislative approval of this particular transmission line are unfortunate. The permitting for the project has barely begun – the developer has not yet identified the location or the cost of the proposed transmission line. I am sorry that you and your fellow legislators are asked to vote on this project at this early stage of development. However, rest assured that passage of this bill, with the OPA’s support, will not diminish our advocacy before the PUC on behalf of Maine ratepayers when the developer petitions the Commission for the required



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Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). The OPA's support for the bill does not mean we support the project regardless of impact on CMP and Versant rates.

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 924 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate