The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 529 “An Act To Ensure Resiliency of the Maine Electrical Grid.”

This bill would require each investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to submit an annual report to the Maine Public Utilities Commission detailing what steps had been taken to protect its bulk transmission system from geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulse. This bill would also require the investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to include in this annual report to the Commission, “neutral direct current monitoring information from autotransformers.” Finally, the bill requires the Commission to include the above-described information as part of its annual report to the Legislature.

These reporting requirements are unnecessary and burdensome. Pursuant to Title 35-A, Section 101, the Maine Public Utilities Commission ensures that Maine’s public utilities provide safe, reasonable and adequate service. In addition, Maine’s transmission and distribution are subject to the requirements and standards set by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The FERC recently approved new reliability standards adopted by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to address potential impacts of geomagnetic disturbances on the reliable operation of the bulk-power system. These standards are the result of a long, detailed proceeding undertaken by an agency that is expert in the safe operation of the bulk transmission grid. Imposing additional annual reporting requirements beyond those required by the regulating authorities will only needlessly add to the burden and costs of the transmission and distribution utilities, without improving safety.

For these reasons, I return LD 529 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor