

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

No. 2205

H.P. 1413

House of Representatives, February 5, 2024

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

(AFTER DEADLINE)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative CYRWAY of Albion.
Cosponsored by President JACKSON of Aroostook and
Representatives: DILL of Old Town, FOSTER of Dexter, HYMES of Waldo, PERKINS of
Dover-Foxcroft, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senators: CURRY of Waldo, FARRIN
of Somerset, STEWART of Aroostook.

1 **Sec. 1. Feasibility study required. Resolved:** That the Public Utilities
2 Commission, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," shall contract with an
3 independent engineering firm to perform a study concerning the feasibility of a 345-
4 kilovolt or greater capacity electric transmission line designed pursuant to the Northern
5 Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, as established in the Maine Revised
6 Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 1, before the commission issues a new
7 request for proposals for development and construction of the electric transmission line
8 pursuant to Title 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 2.

9 **Sec. 2. Administration of feasibility study; partners. Resolved:** That the
10 commission shall contract with an independent engineering firm to formulate and
11 administer the feasibility study. The commission may also contract or otherwise consult
12 with an organization or firm with expertise in public policy related to energy, public utilities
13 or infrastructure. The commission and its chosen partners for the feasibility study are
14 referred to in this resolve as "the project team."

15 **Sec. 3. Feasibility study; requirements. Resolved:** That, in designing the
16 feasibility study, the project team shall identify different technologies and methods for the
17 development and construction of the electric transmission line and possible routes for the
18 transmission corridor. With respect to each proposed solution, the project team shall
19 evaluate:

20 1. The extent to which the proposed electric transmission line would satisfy the
21 requirements of and advance the goals of the Northern Maine Renewable Energy
22 Development Program;

23 2. The extent to which the proposed electric transmission line advances the clean
24 energy goals of the State;

25 3. Infrastructure demands, including:

26 A. An analysis of the new infrastructure development necessary to complete the
27 proposed electric transmission line and connect the line to the proposed King Pine
28 Wind project in Aroostook County;

29 B. The necessity and feasibility of integrating the proposed electric transmission line
30 with existing infrastructure; and

31 C. Possible methods for integrating new or existing broadband infrastructure;

32 4. Resources needed for and possible obstacles associated with successfully and
33 efficiently integrating with the electric grid;

34 5. The extent to which the proposed electric transmission line would affect the land,
35 use of or enjoyment of the land, including:

36 A. Ecological and other environmental impacts;

37 B. Impacts on scenic character;

38 C. Impacts on recreational uses of affected land;

39 D. Impacts on historical sites;

40 E. The extent to which any proposed route would pass through privately owned land;
41 and

- 1 F. The extent to which any proposed route would pass through a state-owned or
- 2 federally owned nature preserve.
- 3 6. Economic impacts, including:
- 4 A. A cost-benefit analysis of the proposed electric transmission line; and
- 5 B. Economic impacts on the citizens, communities and municipalities affected by the
- 6 construction and operation of the proposed electric transmission line;
- 7 7. Public health and safety considerations;
- 8 8. Reliability and resiliency of the proposed electric transmission line when exposed
- 9 to inclement weather, natural disasters and other foreseeable stressors;
- 10 9. Long-term maintenance and repair;
- 11 10. Regulatory and permitting challenges;
- 12 11. Cost allocation; and
- 13 12. Community input.

14 **Sec. 4. Deadline to complete feasibility study. Resolved:** That the project team
15 shall complete the feasibility study no later than January 1, 2026.

16 **Sec. 5. Report. Resolved:** That, after completing the feasibility study, the
17 commission shall, no later than January 14, 2026, issue a report to the joint standing
18 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy, utilities and technology
19 matters. The report must include:

- 20 1. A summary of the feasibility study; and
- 21 2. The project team's recommendations based on the conclusions of the feasibility
- 22 study, including:
 - 23 A. Preferred technologies;
 - 24 B. Recommended siting locations, including any advice concerning particular routes
 - 25 to be avoided; and
 - 26 C. Any recommendations for additional legislation or further study.

27 The joint standing committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second
28 Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

29 **Sec. 6. Further action by commission. Resolved:** That the commission may
30 not resume the request-for-proposals process pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title
31 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 2 or otherwise continue developing an electric
32 transmission line until the following conditions are met:

- 33 1. The feasibility study is completed;
- 34 2. The commission submits its report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature
- 35 having jurisdiction over energy, utilities and technology matters pursuant to section 5; and
- 36 3. The Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature is adjourned.

1 **SUMMARY**

2 This resolve requires the Public Utilities Commission to contract with one or more
3 partners to initiate a study evaluating the feasibility of alternative technologies and siting
4 routes for the development and construction of an electric transmission line pursuant to the
5 Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program. The feasibility study must
6 include an evaluation of a number of factors, including, but not limited to, economic
7 impacts, environmental impacts, public health concerns and a cost-benefit analysis of the
8 proposed electric transmission line and requires the commission to consider community
9 input. Upon conclusion of the feasibility study, the commission is required to issue a report
10 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy, utilities
11 and technology matters, which must include a summary of the feasibility study and any
12 recommendations by the commission and its partners. The resolve authorizes the
13 committee receiving the report to report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular
14 Session of the 132nd Legislature. The commission may not resume the
15 request-for-proposals process or any other work on the electric transmission line until the
16 feasibility study has been completed, the report has been submitted to the joint standing
17 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy, utilities and technology
18 matters and the 132nd Legislature has adjourned.