



Maine Chapter

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Opinion Piece

More and more communities are rejecting the Central Maine Power (CMP) transmission line project (NECEC) that would transport Hydro-Quebec power through pristine areas of the Maine Woods. Nonetheless, the unguided engine of expedited permitting appears to be grinding forward regardless of laws written to assure projects are carefully designed in the best interests of the people and environment of Maine.

While we applaud the Land Use Planning Commission's for taking it's time to carefully examine the project's impact, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are poised to avoid doing their due diligence: to require a complete and thorough Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the consequences and potential damage this project will have on our waterways, streams, wetlands, and forested wetlands.

There has been no documentation put forth to prove that the electricity provided by Hydro-Quebec is either clean or green—that's because it is neither. Mercury and methane, byproducts of large-scale hydro are only two of the many significant climate-changing impacts of these dams. There is also the significant greenhouse gas footprint created during construction, and the social justice impacts that has on the local communities.

In the face of burning Amazonian forests and an era of skyrocketing CO2 emissions, it is irresponsible and illogical to allow our conspicuous electrical consumption to further degrade the boreal and contiguous forests of North America that provide significant carbon sinks. It's also irresponsible to put huge investments into large-scale hydro—diverting away funds that should be invested in much more efficient, effective, and less disruptive energy sources such as solar and wind.

The very scale of NECEC should automatically trigger an EIS. This project totals 145 miles across Western Maine, with 54 miles of new corridor and 26 miles for an unexplained corridor extension between Coopers Mills and Wiscasset. The Public Utilities Commission seems to have lost its way in its approval of a project where no apparent benefit to Mainers has been proven. CMP has offered a paltry sum to the State of Maine, while the shareholders of Ibedrola/Avangrid/CMP stand to make billions of dollars. What CMP is offering Mainers is not nearly enough to offset the significant damage to our state in lost jobs and suppression of locally generated power.

Army Corps and Maine DEP administrators need to do their job, not disregard substantive local citizen and community concerns. After all it's Maine citizens that will be left in the lurch-losing job after job- and losing contiguous forest that can significantly support climate adaptation.

Our neighbors in New Hampshire required an EIS for the similar project proposed in their state. Why are our streams, wetlands and citizens any less important?

The ACOE and Maine DEP must do the right thing and call for an EIS on CMP's NECEC project. Otherwise, they risk demonstrating collusion with outside moneyed interests and disregard for the will of the People of Maine.



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