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Senator Brownie Carson, Chr
Representative Ralph Tucker, Chr
Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

RE: LD 640 Ought to Pass
Date: March 15, 2019

My name is Becky Layton Bartovics and I am here representing Sierra Club Maine and our 18,000 members and supporters. Sierra Club is a national grassroots organization with 3 million members and 63 chapters nationwide.

Sierra Club Maine strongly supports passage of the emergency bill, LD 640. We have expressed deep concern about the CMP/Iberdrola/Avangrid application for its so called North East Clean Energy Connect Transmission Line (NECEC) through western Maine during the PUC application process and at public hearings held around the State. With the expedited April 1st public hearings scheduled at the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) it is very important for the Legislature to require the DEP to provide a full examination of the promised Green House Gas (GHG) reductions prior to any issuance of permits for NECEC and to provide both a full Environmental Impact Statement analysis of the damage to our forests and wetlands in Western Maine as well as provide an “all practicable alternative” analysis.

Quebec Hydro has been absent from **all** of the proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission, therefore no proof of GHG emissions reduction has been provided to the people of Maine. Assumptions have been made, and assertions have been presented that Hydro Quebec will provide cleaner power. What source of power are they using? Is it coming from the Line 3 TarSands pipeline? Is it flooding new landscapes by damming up rivers? And where do they promise cheap electricity? Nowhere in their submission is there proof. Some Environmental Groups have based their support of the project on assumptions that the energy provided will come from a yet to be completed dam on the Romaine River. And somehow that seems like clean energy to them. There is a reason the State of Maine does not qualify large scale hydro dams in our Renewable Portfolio Standard. Large Scale hydro is neither clean nor green.

As they rot, these flooded boreal forests are actually producing significant methane emissions over more than 20 years. Methane is a significant GHG, 80 times more polluting than carbon. Methyl mercury - a potent toxin- and other minerals are also released into the riverine system, and thence to the St Lawrence which provides nutrients to the Gulf of Maine. The calculus about GHG is extremely important. We have to get this right.

While there are those who think that the clearcut corridor will only cover 1000 acres as opposed to the 400,000 acres of forest clear cut for logging in Maine, there is a significant difference between these two areas. First of all 53 miles of a corridor will transect and disrupt wildlife in the largest expanse of uninterrupted forest. It will be “maintained” by a yet to be disclosed



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cocktail of herbicides including Round-up/ Glyphosate every few years. That does not happen on the logged acres. Secondly there are a significant number of wetlands and stream crossings including a vernal pool of significance. Not only are there many people who enjoy the trout fishing and riverine tourism in these waters, but they provide water downstream to many human and other communities. With 10% loss of wetland areas each year and their function and value to our water resources, we lose them at our peril.

Maine people are opposed to this project. Over 97% of the 1000 comments before the PUC on this application are in opposition. I personally am asked wherever I go about why the State is even considering this project because of the damage to the environment and because they see no benefit to the people of Maine. CMP/Iberdrola/Avangrid has not proven itself capable of effectively managing its delivery of electricity to customers around the State, why would we think them capable of determining this project is in our benefit as is required by their charter.

Therefore, because CMP and Hydro Quebec have not provided proof, because Hydro Quebec has never been present before the PUC, because the source of the electricity has never been proven to reduce Green House Gas emissions or what its source will be, because of the expedited nature of this application, because no practicable alternatives were examined, because western Maine residents are opposed, the committee should vote "ought to pass" on LD640 to require the DEP to perform a complete analysis of the GHG emission impact of the CMP/HQ's NECEC application.

Respectfully submitted

Becky Layton Bartovics

Sierra Club Maine

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