

Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Date: March 2, 2021
To: Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology
From: Deirdre Schneider, Legislative Analyst
Re: LD 82, Resolve, To Provide for Participation of the State in the Planning and Negotiations for the Atlantic Loop Energy Project

Summary

This resolve is an emergency that requires the Governor to inform the Prime Minister of Canada and the premiers of the provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec that Maine has a direct interest in all aspect of the Atlantic Loop project.

It requires that the Governor, along with other state agencies and other interested parties designated by the Governor in participating in the planning and negotiations on the Atlantic Loop project to develop and pursue policies consistent with state law, designed to maximize the benefits that all affected parties in the state can obtain from it.

Lastly, it requires the Governor to report at least once every 3 months to this committee on the status and substance of the Maine's involvement in all matters related to the Atlantic Loop project.

The Atlantic Loop project is part of plan to advance renewable energy across 5 provinces and is motivated in part by the Canadian government mandate to retire all coal generation by 2030.

List of People that Submitted Written Testimony and/or Spoke at the Hearing

Proponents: Representative Kessler (Sponsor); Gordon Weil, Sue Ely NRCM; Matthew Kearns, Longroad Energy; Eliza Donoghue, Audubon; Steve Weems, Solar Energy Assoc. of Maine; and Michael Platt.

Opponents: None

Neither for nor against: Dan Burgess, Governor's Energy Office and Joan B. Saxe, Sierra Club Maine

Notes/Issues

- Section 2 of the bill is a little vague and it is unclear if at this stage in the discussions in Canada if this will even be feasible, as there may ultimately be no involvement of Maine. The language directs the Governor, assisted by such state agencies and other interested parties as the Governor designates, to develop and pursue policies, consistent with state law, designed to maximize benefits that all affected parties in the State can obtain from it.
- The language in the emergency preamble is very definitive that this will have a direct impact on Maine, and also specifies that the project will pass through Maine – again at this stage in the planning it is unclear what role, if any Maine will play in this planning process.

Fiscal Impact

- A preliminary fiscal impact statement has not yet been issued.