

THE STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

APPLICATION FOR SITE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACT PERMIT  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT PERMIT  
FOR THE NEW ENGLAND CLEAN ENERGY CONNECT  
FROM QUÉBEC-MAINE BORDER TO LEWISTON  
AND RELATED NETWORK UPGRADES

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

MATT WAGNER

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

**TESTIMONY OF MATT WAGNER**

1 **Please state your name and address.**

2 My name is Matt Wagner. I live at 29 Kenney Road in Knox, Maine. I am also a land  
3 owner and tax payer in The Forks, Maine where I live as a seasonal resident.

4 **What is the name of your organization and business address?**

5 I am writing on behalf of myself, my wife and my children in the interest of our  
6 common future.

7 **What is your current position?**

8 I am the Operations Manager and Co-Owner of InSource Renewables.

9 **What other occupations have you had in the greater Forks area?**

10 I am a Registered Maine Whitewater Guide and previously worked as a commercial  
11 guide and trip leader on day trips and overnight trips.

12 **Why did you intervene in these proceedings?**

13 I intervened due to CMP's clear intent to the abuse of process. I am opposed to the  
14 clearing and construction of the proposed line for several reasons, which I will list  
15 below. As a family we have spent over twenty years hiking, biking, fishing, hunting,  
16 caving, rafting, and guiding in the Enchanted Forest and surrounding area. While we  
17 no longer live in the area, we now own a camp there and bring our children there at  
18 least every other weekend throughout the year. This is the area I consider my home.  
19 As former residents and guides we've lived on both sides of the recreation industry  
20 we now support. Please carefully consider the dramatic reshaping of this critical  
21 area's future in your permitting process. Thanks for taking a moment to consider my  
22 objections as you decide the future of the area.

1 In public presentations CMP has repeatedly perpetuated the notion that the area  
2 where a new corridor is to be built is a degraded or otherwise previously destroyed  
3 industrial forest. While industrial forestry has certainly left its mark, it HAS NOT  
4 permanently fragmented one of the last remaining contiguous forests east of the  
5 Mississippi River, which is exactly what this project would do. Logging roads that  
6 were once 40 feet wide have receded back into barely passable jeep trails in my  
7 lifetime. Allowing a transmission line through this area is a massive shift towards an  
8 industrial landscape, not the working forest that we've long since come to terms  
9 with.

10 As a lifelong outdoorsperson and conservationist, I can attest to some of the great  
11 work that's already been done by conservation organizations to protect this area. The  
12 MBPL lands on the southern slope of Coburn Mountain go largely unvisited but are  
13 an amazing unsung asset to the region. The Cold Stream conservation area attracts  
14 fisherman from all over the world as one of the greatest brook trout habitats in New  
15 England and is known to be the spawning ground for many of the brook trout in the  
16 Upper Kennebec River. The Nature Conservancy's protection of the land  
17 surrounding and including #5 Mountain is without parallel. NECEC threatens all  
18 these places with permanent development, habitat fragmentation, viewshed loss, and  
19 insufficient setbacks from streams that harbor some of the countries last remaining  
20 brook trout fisheries.

21 There are alternatives. This line doesn't need to transect this area. This project has  
22 been selected to save non-Maine ratepayers money over more viable and less

1 ecologically menacing options. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I'm certain the French would

8 give us our 15 million back for the Louisiana Purchase in a heartbeat. The  
9 shortsightedness of this arrangement is staggering.

10 As an aside from the soon to be realized economic costs and ecological concerns, I  
11 have a very human concern that's at the heart of why this project should suffer a  
12 quick rebuke. It's intangible, and I'll share it with you with an anecdote. I once took  
13 a young group of Boy Scouts from southern New England down the Kennebec on a  
14 raft trip. It's a day that I know changed their lives and how they view the natural  
15 world forever. During our trip, a bald eagle was attempting to rob the young from an  
16 osprey nest that hung over the river, not far from the proposed NECEC crossing. I  
17 pulled the boat to shore and we watched for nearly an hour as the osprey and eagle  
18 battled, diving, soaring, striking each other, and screeching loudly as they wheeled  
19 around us. Later that night the scout master told me that many of the kids in other  
20 boats that day had had a blast on the river, but that the kids that had gotten to see the  
21 great birds battling had been given something much greater and that they were  
22 quieter that night as they thought about their day. I hope some of them still carry that  
23 experience with them. Their experience that day couldn't have been had by lifelong

1 effort. I'm certain that while many of them may not come back to experience the  
2 wildness of the area, that the idea of it, that knowing that wild places still exist, and  
3 that they can go there and leave the entanglements of modern life behind, is as  
4 critical to them today as it is to those of us who venture there regularly. There aren't  
5 many of these places left that are accessible to regular people on the east coast. A  
6 day on the river for many is a chance to re-find that bond with wildness. It doesn't  
7 matter that beyond the buffer lays a working forest that they can't see.

8 A lot of great work has been done to protect this experience, whether it's at the top of  
9 Enchanted Mountain, riding a raft on the Kennebec Gorge, or casting a fly to a rising  
10 trout on Cold Stream. I urge you on behalf of all who find rejuvenation in wildness  
11 to deny the application to bisect this wild and scenic area with a transmission  
12 corridor.

Date:

Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: Matthew Wagner

*Matthew S. Wagner*

STATE OF Maine  
COUNTY OF Somerset

Personally appeared before me the above- named Matthew Wagner, who being duly sworn, did testify that the foregoing testimony was true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Before me,

*Michelle Hopkins*

Notary Public/ Attorney

My Commission expires

