



Native Fish Coalition
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October 15, 2018

Maine Department of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station
28 Tyson Drive
Augusta, Me 04333-0017
NECEC.DEP@maine.gov

Re: Comments Regarding Proposed Central Maine Power Transmission Line Construction

Dear Maine Department of Environmental Protection,

I am writing on behalf of Native Fish Coalition. Our intent is to provide comments on Central Maine Power's New England Clean Energy Connect, a proposal to build a 145-mile, high-voltage, direct current transmission line through the state from the Maine/Quebec border.

Native Fish Coalition (NFC) is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to protect, preserve and restore native fish. We are a 501(c)(3) national organization incorporated in Maine. The Maine chapter has a Board of Directors and Advisory Council as well as members, partners and volunteers. Native brook trout are a focal species for Maine NFC.

The Maine chapter of Native Fish Coalition opposes the proposal as submitted based on the following:

1. The project path as proposed creates a new 53-mile transmission corridor through the heart of Maine's native brook trout country in Somerset and Franklin Counties, including passing through the newly acquired Cold Stream Forest public land, home to seven State Heritage Fish waters; the Kennebec Gorge, the most significant brook trout river fishery east of Rangeley; and near Beattie Pond, a remote pond on Passamaquoddy tribal lands and a designated State Heritage Fish water.
2. The proposal would also require new vegetative clearing and expanding transmission line development within 92 miles of existing corridors, much of which will negatively impact native brook trout habitat. In aggregate, the proposed 145-mile line will be built across 263 wetlands and 115 streams, many of which contain native brook trout.

3. Creating new transmission lines, widening existing lines and building access roads will require deforestation that will degrade coldwater habitat and water quality required to maintain native brook trout populations by eliminating shade trees and causing bank destabilization in riparian zones.
4. Maintaining adequate riparian buffers is critical to the protection of water temperatures, water quality, and inputs of coarse woody debris necessary to support conditions required by brook trout and other aquatic life. The minimal buffer proposed in the plan will not be adequate to protect coldwater resources.
5. Spraying of herbicides to facilitate vegetation clearing threatens native brook trout populations by degrading water quality and imperiling aquatic ecosystems as chemicals wash into streams and ponds.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Emily Bastian
Maine State Chair, Native Fish Coalition
CC: Maine NFC Board and Advisory Council