

Kirkland, April

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**From:** Thomas, Richard <richard.thomas@mainegeneral.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 20, 2019 1:57 PM  
**To:** DEP, NECEC  
**Subject:** Comment on NECEC project

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Dear Governor Janet Mills and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection,

I am writing to thank you sincerely for your work to protect the environment that will support our children's lives, and to express my worry that the NECEC Project will pollute our streams, wetlands, rivers and lakes along its route. You know more than I about the toxicity of the herbicidal chemicals that would be periodically sprayed along these miles to kill the foliage under the power lines. I suspect you know about the insect apocalypse that is now occurring, which is apparently caused in part by the toxic chemicals, insecticides and herbicides, that people are spraying so indiscriminately. E.O. Wilson is one of the world's leading entomologists, and he says that if human beings became extinct, the rest of the biosphere would do just fine, but if insects become extinct, the entire biological system of life would collapse. We ignore the progressive polluting of our environment, and the 80% reduction in insect life that is now occurring, at our grandchildren's peril.

I am equally concerned about the increase in greenhouse gas emissions associated with Hydro-Quebec power. I suspect you know that creating new dams for hydro power results in a huge surge in methane production, as the carbon in soils and trees begins to degrade anaerobically. And the plant life that grows seasonally on the shores of these lakes is flooded and dies annually, and is also digested anaerobically, creating a yearly surge in methane being released into the atmosphere. Calculated over the first 20 years, before most of the methane in the atmosphere is converted into CO<sub>2</sub>, methane has 86 times as powerful a greenhouse gas effect as CO<sub>2</sub>. This is why the State of Maine does not qualify large-scale Hydro dams in our renewable portfolio standard. Finally, the cutting of this corridor and the creation of the metal poles and power lines will produce massive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>.

I would like to ask your department to calculate the amount of greenhouse gases involved here and seek legally enforceable commitments from Hydro-Quebec about whether they would create a new dam for this electricity, or sell electricity to Massachusetts that was previously being sold to New York State. In the absence of this information, I do not believe that an informed decision can be made about how damaging this corridor would be to our climate. It seems likely that an alternative investment in energy efficiency and solar power would reduce climate change more than the NECEC project. But CMP's concern is about profits, not what is best for our children's future, and it is your role to address this sustainability concern.

Lastly, I have a general concern that our government has typically failed to be assertive enough in terms of investigating threats and protecting our planet. Corporate money too often controls what happens on the State and Federal level. Too often, corporations are allowed to maximize their profits in ways that harm our children's future, and they do this by lying or failing to reveal key information to regulatory bodies like your own. The stakes are terribly high here. The survivability of our civilization into the next century is not certain. Please investigate this issue comprehensively. Happily, I believe that you have the power to make a very meaningful difference here. I cannot adequately express how much I appreciate your work on this.

Sincerely yours, Richard Thomas, PhD. (207) 872-4675 richard.thomas@mainegeneral.org