



Testimony LD 901.

Senator Saviello, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Richard Hall and I am a Senior Project Manager at SGC Engineering. We are an engineering firm with Maine offices in Westbrook, Hallowell, Bangor and Presque Isle.

I'm here today in strong opposition to the changes to Maine's visual impact laws as proposed in LD 901.

SGC Engineering has been providing engineering services for the Wind industry since 2005. Our company employs 40 engineers working in Maine, and several engineers depend on the Wind Industry. Fortunately, while the Maine Wind Industry is on hiatus to solve transmission issues, our engineers are able to focus their efforts on Wind projects in other states.

In our opinion, the increase in visual impact consideration from 8 miles to 15 miles would eliminate the onshore wind industry in Maine.

This 15-mile standard seems entirely arbitrary, and we believe its sole purpose is to harm the Wind industry. Maine should not regulate according to subjective standards. Some people are bothered by the sight of a wind tower, but I know there are many who point them out with pride. When I see wind towers, I see clean renewable energy and jobs. Clean, inexpensive, renewable energy helps to protect Maine's environment by reducing the amount of higher carbon-producing energy production and helps to keep our economy growing through development and maintenance of the Wind power facilities. Wind power helps to make Maine a better place to live.

Maine's economy is in desperate need of stability. Through the recession, the Wind industry has kept our engineers employed while other firms saw reductions in their project load and workforce. Wind projects have brought several million dollars in investment to Maine, along with thousands of good-paying jobs.

If this bill becomes law, that investment will evaporate. That means Maine's economy takes another brutal hit, and our engineers lose the opportunity to design Wind projects for Maine.

The Wind industry has been an extremely positive development for our state. It has brought jobs, outside investment, and it has created an important industry. The Wind industry has the potential to continue to provide jobs and protect our natural resource.

For those reasons, I strongly urge you to vote No on LD 901.

Thank you.

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