

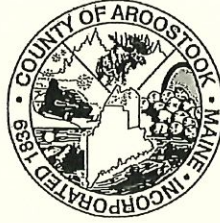
# County of Aroostook

## COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE

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### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

RYAN D. PELLETIER



### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PAUL J. ADAMS  
HOULTON

NORMAN L. FOURNIER  
WALLAGRASS

PAUL J. UNDERWOOD  
PRESQUE ISLE

May 18, 2021

Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee  
Hon. Representative Seth Berry, Chair  
Hon. Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Chair Berry, Chair Lawrence and Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony on behalf of the Aroostook County Commission in support of LD 1710.

As the Committee is aware, Aroostook County needs economic development and long-term reliable revenues as much or more than any other county in Maine. The population of Aroostook continues to age and decline, resulting in a smaller workforce and fewer taxpayers. Younger-aged populations continue to leave and municipal tax bases are getting smaller while municipal costs continue to rise.

To counter this trend, Aroostook County needs more economic development – but we also need the right kind of economic development, the kind that creates jobs, tax revenues and economic activity, while also helping the County pivot toward an innovation economy that attracts and retains workers, the kind of development that invests in the well-being of our people and the region for the long term.

LD 1710 represents an unparalleled opportunity for Aroostook County, at scale we have not seen in many years. This legislation promises a multi-billion dollar capital investment in the County and its electric infrastructure, which will help unlock the natural resources of the county and improve grid reliability. Secondly, it will create the hundreds and hundreds of construction jobs to build the transmission line and the wind and solar farms, along with the many long-term operations and maintenance jobs that will last for decades. Then there are the tax revenues, which will support vital first-responder and social services in the state. Then there are the secondary and tertiary economic opportunities for smaller businesses in the region including in

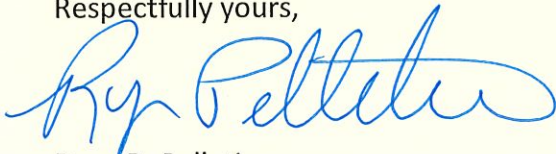
concrete, gravel and fencing; civil equipment operation; security and road maintenance; trucking; restaurants, lodging and tourism; legal and engineering services and more.

From the perspective of our County's finances, LD 1710 represents an unprecedented economic injection. I would remind members of the Committee that wind energy farms pay a required community benefit of \$4,000 per year per turbine. In addition, the County would expect to negotiate Tax Increment Financing arrangements with each of the major renewable energy generation projects. Over a period of 30 years – which is the typical lifespan of renewable energy facilities – these two revenue streams could easily generate over \$100 million in the County. It is hard to overstate the kind of impact that this scale of investment could have on a socially vulnerable county such as ours, to invest in public services and to make the capital investments we have not been able to afford.

Aroostook County has been hoping, for many years, to attract exactly the kind of investment that LD 1710 represents: An investment in innovation, in our people, in our infrastructure. We recognize that there is limited time left to this legislative session but we would urge you not to miss this opportunity to help Aroostook County, particularly as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Please contact me should have any questions.

Respectfully yours,



Ryan D. Pelletier  
County Administrator