

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §1852, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 1997, c. 678, §13 and amended by PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24, is further amended to read:

4. Lease of public reserved land for utilities and rights-of-way. The bureau may lease the right, for a term not exceeding 25 years, to:

- A. Set and maintain or use poles, electric power transmission and telecommunication transmission lines and facilities, roads, bridges and landing strips;
- B. Lay and maintain or use pipelines and railroad tracks; and
- C. Establish and maintain or use other rights-of-way.

Any such poles, transmission lines and facilities, landing strips, pipelines and railroad tracks under this subsection are deemed to substantially alter the uses of the land within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23, and a lease or conveyance for the purpose of constructing and operating such poles, transmission lines and facilities, landing strips, pipelines and railroad tracks under this subsection may not be granted without first obtaining the vote of 2/3 of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature.

Notwithstanding Title 1, section 302 or any other provision of law to the contrary, this subsection applies retroactively to September 16, 2014.

Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §3131, sub-§4-A, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 655, Pt. A, §3, is amended to read:

4-A. High-impact electric transmission line. "High-impact electric transmission line" means a transmission line greater than 50 miles in length ~~that is not located in a statutory corridor, as defined in section 122, subsection 1, paragraph F 4, or a petitioned corridor, as defined in section 122, subsection 1, paragraph D 1, and that is:~~

- A. Constructed to transmit direct current electricity; or
- B. Capable of operating at 345 kilovolts or more and:
 - (1) Is not a generator interconnection transmission facility as defined in section 3132, subsection 1-B; and
 - (2) Is not constructed primarily to provide electric reliability, as determined by the commission.

Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §3132, sub-§6-A, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 655, Pt. A, §5, is amended to read:

6-A. High-impact electric transmission line; certificate of public convenience and necessity. The commission shall evaluate and render a decision on any petition for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a high-impact transmission line ~~in accordance with section 122, subsection 1-D.~~

Sec. 4. 35-A MRSA §3132, sub-§6-C is enacted to read:

6-C. High-impact electric transmission line; legislative approval. In addition to obtaining a certificate of public convenience and necessity, a high-impact electric transmission line may not be constructed anywhere in the State without first obtaining the

approval of the Legislature, except that any high-impact electric transmission line crossing or utilizing public lands designated by the Legislature pursuant to Title 12, section 598-A is deemed to substantially alter the land and must be approved by the vote of 2/3 of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature.

Sec. 5. 35-A MRSA §3132, sub-§6-D is enacted to read:

6-D. High-impact electric transmission line; geographic prohibition. Notwithstanding subsection 6-C, a high-impact electric transmission line may not be constructed in the Upper Kennebec Region. For the purpose of this subsection, "Upper Kennebec Region" means the approximately 43,300 acres of land located between the Town of Bingham and Wyman Lake, north along the Old Canada Road, Route 201, to the Canadian border, and eastward from the Town of Jackman to encompass Long Pond and westward to the Canadian border, in Somerset County and Franklin County.

Sec. 6. 35-A MRSA §3132, sub-§6-E is enacted to read:

6-E. Retroactivity. Notwithstanding Title 1, section 302 or any other provision of law to the contrary, subsections 6-C and 6-D apply retroactively to September 16, 2020 and apply to any high-impact electric transmission line the construction of which had not commenced as of that date.

SUMMARY

This initiated bill requires the approval of the Legislature for the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines and provides that high-impact electric transmission lines crossing or utilizing public lands must be approved by 2/3 of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature. This initiated bill also prohibits the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines in the Upper Kennebec Region. These provisions apply retroactively to September 16, 2020, the date of filing of this initiative.

This initiated bill also requires the approval of 2/3 of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature for any use of public lands for transmission lines and facilities and certain other projects. This provision applies retroactively to September 16, 2014.