

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2026-00033

September 4, 2026

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Request for Proposals for Renewable
Energy Generation and Transmission
Projects Pursuant to the Northern Maine
Renewable Energy Development Program,
35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I

ORDER ON BID PROPOSALS

BARTLETT, Chairman; SCULLY and GILBERT, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

Through this Order and pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I (the Act), the Commission recommends the proposal of Avangrid Networks, Inc. (Avangrid) to construct a 1200 megawatt (MW) transmission line from Pittsfield, Maine to Haynesville, Maine, and awards Clearway Energy Group LLC (Clearway) a contract for 600 MW of its 800 MW proposal, both as explained in more detail below.

II. POLICY BACKGROUND

One of the requirements of the Act is that the Commission conduct this procurement to promote energy equity, high-quality jobs, and the development of a skilled workforce, “with particular consideration given to the economic circumstances and opportunities in the State’s socially vulnerable communities.” 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(1)(D).¹ Much of northern Maine is not electrically integrated with the remainder of the State or New England but is instead served radially from New Brunswick. This structure, and the long distances involved, have created substantial obstacles to the development of energy projects in northern Maine that could take advantage of the region’s significant resources. Consequently, northern Maine and its residents have been deprived of meaningful economic development opportunities including jobs, tax revenues, and investment in local communities. The Legislature enacted this procurement in part to provide a mechanism to overcome those obstacles and allow both northern Maine and the entire State to benefit from the ability to develop energy resources in this region. The transmission and generation projects described below are

¹ The Act defines “socially vulnerable counties and communities” as “those counties and communities in the State containing populations that are disproportionately burdened by existing social inequities or lack the capacity to withstand new or worsening burdens.” 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(1)(D).

expected to, over their lifespans, provide approximately \$400 million of net benefits to Maine ratepayers and create over 2,500 jobs while under construction and \$2.4 billion in economic output.

The Act also requires the Commission to conduct this procurement in a manner that will encourage the rapid development of renewable resources in northern Maine to achieve greenhouse gas reductions. *Id.* at § 3210-I(1)(A). To this end, the development of the onshore wind project selected here pairs well with Maine's increasing winter load. The average production of wind energy is highest during the winter months when supply in the region is constrained and prices escalate. In addition to providing cost and reliability benefits for Maine ratepayers, the Commission's analysis predicts that when the transmission and generation resources discussed in this Order come online, they will reduce the use of oil-fired energy generation by 10 percent.

Finally, the Act established for the Commission a goal to partner with other states, governmental entities, or utilities in New England in the development of a request for proposals and in the evaluation of bid proposals. *Id.* at § 3210-I(1)(F). The Commission's decision today is the culmination of three years of work by the Commission and its Staff, other New England States, the Independent System Operator – New England (ISO-NE), the New England State Committee on Electricity (NESCOE), and many other entities to bring forward viable and beneficial projects to deliver clean renewable power from northern Maine. This effort has seen remarkable collaboration among the New England States to work together to make this happen, through both the Longer-Term Transmission Planning (LTP) process undertaken by ISO-NE at the request of New England States and through this procurement. It has demonstrated that separate, sovereign governments can work together to plan for and make significant investments in transmission and generation resources and, perhaps surprisingly, agree on how to share the costs and benefits of those investments. The Commission believes this could serve as a model for other regions to work collaboratively to meet common energy, climate, and reliability goals.

III. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Maine Legislature originally enacted An Act to Require Prompt and Effective Use of the Renewable Energy Resources of Northern Maine, P.L. 2021, ch. 380 (the initial Act) in 2021 during its 130th session. Now codified at 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I, the provisions of the initial Act require the Commission to issue a request for proposals seeking to procure: (1) a transmission line or lines that will deliver at least 1,200 megawatts of renewable energy resources located in northern Maine to the system administered by the ISO-NE; and (2) renewable energy projects in northern Maine that will generate the energy to be delivered by that line or lines.²

² The Act defines northern Maine as "Aroostook County and any other area of the State in which the retail market is administered by the independent system administrator for northern Maine." 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(1).

The Commission conducted an initial procurement pursuant to the provisions of the initial Act in Docket No. 2021-00369 through a request for proposals issued on November 29, 2021. In an order issued on December 22, 2023, the Commission terminated that initial procurement and indicated its intent to initiate a second procurement under the initial Act. The Legislature, after the termination of the procurement in Docket No. 2021-00369, made several amendments to the initial Act through the enactment of P.L. 2023, ch. 660, also codified at 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I, including that the Commission seek to partner or coordinate with other states, governmental entities, or utilities within New England. 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(F).

IV. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Commission issued Requests for Information and Indications of Interest in Docket No. 2024-00099 on May 10, 2024 and April 1, 2025 seeking information from interested persons concerning the initiation of a new procurement under the Act, as amended. On Oct 3, 2025, the Commission issued a Draft Request for Proposals in Docket No. 2024-00099, soliciting input from potential bidders and other interested persons on the structure and requirements for the procurement of qualified transmission and generation projects in northern Maine.

The Commission issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) in this proceeding on December 19, 2025 in Docket No. 2025-00361,³ describing how the Commission was proceeding in coordination with governmental agencies and utilities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont (together with Maine the “Coordinating States”). The RFP notified bidders that proposals submitted to the Commission would be shared with the other Coordinating States, each of which would conduct their own evaluation of the bids based on their respective laws, regulations, and policies. RFP at 6.

The RFP sought to procure one or more generation facilities in northern Maine (the “Generation Component”) and a transmission line of at least 1200 MW that would connect the output of the generation facility or facilities to the ISO-NE system (the “Transmission Component”). The RFP specifically provided that the Transmission Component must deliver the output of the Generation Component to the Longer-Term Transmission Upgrade (LTTU) that would be selected and procured by ISO-NE under

³ As described in a procedural order issued in the above-captioned docket on February 6, 2026, to provide additional security for the confidential bids submitted in response to the RFP, the Commission closed Docket No. 2025-00361 and directed interested developers to submit their proposals in a confidential project file established by the Commission. The Commission then opened the above-captioned docket as a mechanism for providing notice and copies of all public filings by the Commission, other participating states, and interested parties.

the LTTP.⁴ The LTTU is intended to address limitations on the transfer of energy from northern to southern New England and is expected to include the construction of a new substation at or near Pittsfield, Maine that will coincide with the southern terminus of the Transmission Component. *Id.* at 5, 12.

The RFP expressed a preference for joint proposals that paired the Generation Component with the Transmission Component, but also allowed for the submission of separate, stand-alone generation and transmission bids.⁵ *Id.* at 4. All proposals were originally due on or before February 27, 2026. *Id.* at 7. Joint proposals were required to include what was referred to as a Coordination Agreement, describing how the generation and transmission projects would coordinate to allocate and manage the associated risks of development, construction, and operation among themselves. *Id.* at 9. Stand-alone proposals for transmission or generation were required to include a draft Coordination Agreement containing the terms that the bidder would be willing to agree to with a complementary proposal selected by the Commission. *Id.* The RFP also notified bidders that if a stand-alone bid received an award that award would be contingent on the bidder's ability to finalize a Coordination Agreement with the complementary Transmission or Generation Component. *Id.*

Pursuant to the RFP, the Transmission Component will be funded and developed through a Voluntary Agreement (VA) between the selected transmission developer and the appropriate entities or agencies representing one or more of the Coordinating States. *Id.* at 18. A model term sheet for the VA was attached to the RFP and bidders were informed that, with the exception of certain provisions that contained clear instructions regarding permissible modifications, transmission developers were expected to adopt the model term sheet. *Id.* at 19.

Because the transmission developer is expected to recover its costs through a transmission rate approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the

⁴ ISO-NE issued its Longer-Term Transmission Planning (LTTP) RFP on March 31, 2025, in response to a December 13, 2024 request from NESCOE to secure (among other things) the development of new infrastructure sited at or near Pittsfield, ME that could accommodate the interconnection of at least 1,200 MW of onshore wind. See 2025 Longer-Term Transmission Planning Request for Proposals (2025 LTTP RFP) Revision 1, available at: [2025 ltpp rfp prelim preferred soln pac 2026-07-28 rev1 clean.pdf](#) (last visited on September 3, 2026). The LTTP RFP process is ongoing, but ISO-NE has released its preferred solution for an LTTU. See Longer-Term Proposal Evaluations and Selection of the Preferred Longer Term Transmission Solution, available at: [final 2025 ltpp rfp report.pdf](#) (last visited on September 3, 2026).

⁵ The RFP required bidders submitting stand-alone transmission proposals to also provide, by January 23, 2026, information necessary for the submission of stand-alone generation bids, including the northern terminus of the proposed transmission line. That information would be made available to generation bidders that had executed a non-disclosure agreement. RFP at 7.

VA will be used to document the cost allocation, cost recovery, cost containment, and other relevant provisions associated with constructing the transmission project. Pursuant to the RFP, after being selected, the transmission developer will promptly initiate a Section 205 proceeding at FERC for approval of the VA as finalized with the agency or entity representing the Coordinating States to establish the transmission rate and responsibility for payment of the transmission project. The resulting transmission rate will be set forth in a new attachment to the ISO-NE open access transmission tariff. *Id.* at 18-19.

On January 21, 2026, Commission Staff issued a model Maine Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to be executed by the selected generation developer(s) and a Maine transmission and distribution (T&D) utility selected by the Commission. Commission Staff also filed model PPAs from Rhode Island and Massachusetts in this docket on February 6, 2026. Because Connecticut's participation in the RFP was conducted through a procurement administered by that State's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), model PPAs for Connecticut utilities were provided at the DEEP's website, a link for which was posted in this docket on January 5, 2026.

On January 29, 2026, Commission Staff, with representatives from the Coordinating States, conducted a conference to respond to questions from potential bidders. Commission Staff also accepted questions from potential bidders via email and published the responses in a question-and-answer log which was initially filed in the docket on February 6, 2026 and thereafter updated several times.

The RFP was amended through a procedural order issued on January 23, 2026, which provided revised language on how generation bidders could include the value of capacity in their proposals and how all bidders should submit their security deposits. A procedural order issued on February 10, 2026 further amended the RFP by extending to March 13, 2026 the submission of final pricing for generation bids, updated pricing for transmission bids, and proposed amendments to model PPAs.

The Commission, after reviewing the bids received in response to the RFP, issued an order on April 28, 2026 reopening the bid window. In doing so, the Commission noted that it had received several requests for a longer bid window to allow as many bidders as possible to develop their proposals and participate. After reviewing these requests and considering the requirement in the Act that the Commission "make every effort" to ensure that the procurement process resulted in the approval of contracts, 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(3), the Commission determined that it would be in the interest of ratepayers to extend the bid window to allow for an increase in the number of bid proposals and possible project combinations. The Commission correspondingly issued an amended RFP setting new deadlines of May 29, 2026 for the submission of updated or new stand-alone transmission bids and joint bids and June 12, 2026 for the submission of updated or new stand-alone generation bids. Several bids were received on or before the extended deadlines.

V. DISCUSSION AND DECISION

In evaluating the bid proposals for the Transmission Component, the Commission is required to consider cost, the economic benefit to northern Maine, the long-term viability of a proposed project, and the anticipated contribution a project would make towards meeting Maine's renewable energy goals. 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(2)(B). The Act also includes several preferences for the Commission to consider, including one for projects that will use pre-existing utility and other rights of way. *Id.* at § 3210-I(2)(C).

Having reviewed the bid proposals and the analysis Commission Staff conducted pursuant to section four of the RFP and taking into account the statutory considerations contained in the Act, the Commission recommends Avangrid's proposed 1200 MW transmission line from Pittsfield to Haynesville to serve as the Transmission Component. A large advantage of this proposal is that this transmission project will utilize existing transmission corridors to the maximum extent possible and the developer has secured nearly all of the required rights of way. This project also demonstrated the strongest viability within a commercially reasonable time. Consistent with the approach outlined in the RFP to utilize a voluntary agreement structure, and in light of the participation of four other New England states in developing this project, the finalization of the VA will take place with NESCOE and Maine's share of the cost will be significantly less than the full amount.

For the Generation Component, the statute directs the Commission to consider the overall cost, economic benefits to northern Maine, project viability, and the qualifications of the bidders. 35-A M.R.S. § 3210-I(3)(C). Having reviewed the bids and Commission Staff's analysis, the Commission finds that Clearway's 800 MW project is the most cost-effective project that will provide the maximum benefit for Maine ratepayers. For these reasons the Commission awards Clearway a contract with a Maine T&D utility for 600 MW of that project for both energy and renewable energy credits, with the remainder to be contracted for by other Coordinating States. This selection excludes capacity, utilizes the pricing index developed by Commission Staff, and sets the busbar as the delivery point. Consistent with the Act, however, this award is contingent on the Transmission Component moving forward. *Id.* at § 3210-I(3) (requiring the Commission to seek proposals for renewable generation projects located in northern Maine that will transmit energy over the line constructed under § 3210-I(3)).⁶

Together, the Avangrid Transmission Component and the Clearway Generation Component maximize the potential benefits to Maine ratepayers while reducing the risks and costs through the participation of the other Coordinating States.

⁶ This award to Clearway for its 800 MW project leaves approximately 400 MW available on Avangrid's 1200 MW transmission line. One or more requests for proposals will be issued in the future to maximize the utilization of the transmission line, as required by the Act. *Id.* at § 3210-I(3-A).

VI. CONCLUSION

The Commission expresses its thanks and appreciation to the other Coordinating States and entities that worked so collaboratively and made extraordinary efforts to bring this procurement to a successful conclusion through both scrutinizing the many proposals received in response to the RFP and confronting sensitive legal, political, and technical issues at the federal, regional, and state levels.

For the reasons discussed above, the Commission recommends that the proposal of Avangrid to construct a 1200 MW transmission line from Pittsfield, Maine to Haynesville, Maine serve as the Transmission Component and awards Clearway a contract for 600 megawatts of its 800 MW proposal to serve as the Generation Component.

Dated at Hallowell, Maine, this 4th day of August 2026.

/s/ Amy Dumeny

Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR:

Bartlett
Scully
Gilbert

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to seek review of or to appeal the Commission's decision. The methods of review or appeal of Commission decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 11(D) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R. ch. 110) within **20** days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought. Any petition not granted within **20** days from the date of filing is denied.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within **21** days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 1320(5).

Pursuant to 5 M.R.S. § 8058 and 35-A M.R.S. § 1320(6), review of Commission Rules is subject to the jurisdiction of the Superior Court.

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.