Honorable members of the Committee:

My name is Stephanie Barrett, of 25 Pickerel Ln, Belgrade, ME.  I have asked Sandra Howard to act on my behalf to ensure my opposition to the Clean Energy Connect project is entered into the record, as I am unavailable to testify at the Public Witness Hearing. I appreciate Ms. Howard's offer to assure that my voice has been heard.

The issue of this powerline is fraught with questions and has turned neighbor against neighbor in what was once a tightly knit community.  I lived and worked in the West Forks region seasonally from '91 to 2003 with 3 years of year-round residency in Caratunk and have remained connected to the area ever since.  I've paddled the rivers, ambled in the woods, and driven the woods roads.  Those of us that have spent that time are deeply attached to the area and are fearful for further despoilment.

Make no bones about it, I do not see this area as a pristine wilderness, as some do.  I know if has been cut-over countless times and the remnants of the old paper industries going back over a hundred years continue to scar the land.  I also know a power corridor, alone, could grow back as quickly as the paper land forests have.

My opposition is rooted in numerous concerns. I don't know a single corporation, in this day and age, that acts on behalf of humanity in any of their decision making. They operate on money and money alone.  CMP stands to make a bundle on this deal. The question of this being 'clean' energy is likely impossible to quantify, but when you take in balance the carbon, the impounded rivers, the displaced indigenous people, the loss of electricity over the distance it will be shipped, I have to say, it appears the balance tips against the more noble promises of this project.

When you look at jobs gained, how is that offset by jobs lost to people who subsist on the land in the region where this line will go?  What real jobs does a powerline generate anyway?  I know that when things go awry after storms in Maine, I see crews from all over the country, because my neighbors were too expensive-too much of a drag on the bottom line- to keep on standby, to be ready in the event of a storm.

The very attraction of the western Mountains is their relatively remote, undeveloped status.  A place where you might still run into a moose or a bear (with your car or otherwise,) where the people that get by year round do it by engaging in outdoor recreation, hunting, and fishing, where you can drift off into the woods for hours or days and be on your own- away.  Those ways of life appear to be at risk.

It is my greatest concern what other industrial development will be opened up by this big electric pipe.  Of that, no one can predict, though once the infrastructure is there, the development will be inevitable.

On these grounds, I am opposed to this project.

Thank you for hearing my comments.

Stephanie Barrett