

East-West Highway and Energy Corridor Bills

On May 30, the Transportation Committee will hold a hearing on six bills dealing with the East-West highway and utility corridor. Members of the public who wish to testify will be given three minutes to speak, and can submit written testimony with more detailed comments. Speakers should bring 20 copies of any written testimony. Several of the six bills (summarized below) have overlapping provisions. NRCM opposes development of an East-West highway and energy corridor. More details can be found [at the NRCM website](#).

Regarding the six bills below, NRCM supports: 1) Rescinding the \$300,000 East-West highway study that the Department of Transportation was authorized to do in 2012; 2) Require public access to documents associated with any East-West corridor project that is pursued as a public-private partnership; 3) Prohibit the use of public funding or public land for an East-West corridor; and 4) Pursue upgrades of existing transportation infrastructure, including rail and roads, instead of construction of a new public or private highway that would cause major harm to the environment and Maine communities.

1. **Rescind DOT Study**

LD 362, “An Act To Prohibit Use of Public Funds for a Private Transportation Study,” Sen. Valentino. Cosponsors: Theriault, Boyle, Mazurek, Peoples, Powers

- Prohibits the use of DOT funds to pay for a traffic and revenue study or finance plan in connection with a proposal for a transportation facility made by a private entity.

LD 985, “Resolve, to Repeal the Requirement that the Department of Transportation Facilitate a Feasibility Study of an East-West Highway and Provide for Public Access of Certain Documents,” Sen. Mazurek; Cosponsors: Cassidy, McLean, Peoples, Powers, Theriault, Werts

- Repeals last session’s investment feasibility study (c. 147) and its reimbursement, and specifies that any related documents are public and not confidential.

2. **Rescind DOT Study and Prohibit Public Funds/Land for Private E-W Corridor**

LD 1209, “An Act To Prohibit the Use of Public Resources for a Privately Owned East-West Highway,” Rep. Cassidy; Cosponsors: Chapman, Chenette, Gideon, Noon, Rykerson.

- Prohibits the use of public funds or public property for the construction or development of a privately owned east-west highway, including preparation or study for the development of a privately owned east-west highway. Also repeals Resolve 2011, c. 147, which authorized finance study.

3. Rescind DOT Study and Require Comprehensive Independent Study

LD 1269, “An Act To Require an Independent Analysis of the Impact of and a Review Process for an East-West Highway prior to Development,” Rep. Chapman; Cosponsors: Cassidy, Harlow.

- Requires comprehensive independent analysis of all environmental, economic, and cultural risks and impacts on Maine’s residents and landscape. Cost of study must be paid for by the entity proposing the project, whether a private entity or entity engaged in public private partnership with the State. Public comment and input required, and intervenor status granted to towns and property owners for any proceedings held. Also prohibits the use of public funds and repeals last session’s economic feasibility study (c. 147).

4. Require DOT to Study Existing E-W Assets and Cost-Effective Upgrades

LD 870, “Resolve, Regarding a Study by the Department of Transportation of the Most Efficient Options for Improving East-West Transit and Transportation,” Sen. Mazurek; Cosponsors: Kumiega, Jackson, Saviello, Thomas, Valentino, Welsh

- Directs the DOT to study existing highways and rail assets to determine cost-effective upgrades to enhance east-west transit and transportation in Maine. Public input required. DOT report due by January 15, 2014.

5. Creates Legislative E-W Highway Study Commission

LD 1304, “Resolve, Establishing the East-west Highway Study Commission To Oversee Further Study or Planning for an East-west Highway,” Rep. McCabe; Cosponsors: Jackson, Carey

- Establishes an 11-member legislative study committee—the East-West Highway Study Commission—to oversee study of east-west highway. Six members would be legislators (4 D; 2 R); three would be residents along E-W corridor; one public member with rail transportation expertise; and the DOT Commissioner. Commission to examine costs and benefits and “wide range of options,” including alternatives. Three regional public hearings required along the route. Final report due January 15, 2014.