STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION Inquiry Regarding Review of the Nonwires Alternatives Investigation and Recommendation Process No. 2025-00307	**ACADIA CENTER'S REPLY COMMENTS** January 14, 2026

On November 14, 2025, the Commission released a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) initiating "an inquiry to review the nonwires alternatives (NWA) investigation and recommendation process and prepare a report for the Legislature," which included several questions to stakeholders to inform any possible "straw proposal and/or report to the Legislature." On December 19, 2025, Acadia Center submitted comments responsive to the NOI. On January 7, 2026, the Commission published a Procedural Order requesting Reply Comments be filed by January 14, 2026. Acadia Center, a Maine nonprofit research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the clean energy future in Maine, here provides Reply Comments.

Acadia Center continues to support the recommendations outlined in its initial Comments. However, to the extent there is overlap in potential solutions to either 1) the ongoing disagreement around the NWA coordinator's (NWAC) exact legal purview and potential statutory remediation options or 2) the use of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to organize utility data sharing obligations, Acadia Center would be supportive, in the alternative, of the similar recommendations made in the initial Comments of the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA), the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), or Efficiency Maine Trust (EMT).

Acadia Center also encourages the Commission to adopt the usage of the Commission's Case Management System (CMS) to improve transparency, efficiency and accountability around the NWA process, as recommended by OPA, NRCM and EMT. Integrating the NWA process into CMS seems like a straightforward but fundamental process change that may substantially improve communications between the utilities and the NWAC and OPA, while also providing invaluable insight into the process to outside stakeholders. Acadia Center

agrees this would allow for more efficient data collection and better effectuate the Commission enforcement identified in 35-A M.R.S. § 3132-C.

Additionally, Acadia Center supports NRCM's recommendation to establish a non-adjudicatory process for resolving technical issues, potentially using a working group. If such a group is established, Acadia Center would be interested in the opportunity to participate and contribute. Acadia Center also supports NRCM's recommendation to establish a Performance Incentive Mechanism for successful NWA adoption, as it could provide a functional tactic to improve utility involvement.

Regarding aligning the IGP process with the NWA process, Acadia Center appreciates the OPA's pointing out potential alignment between the statutory NWA 5-year planning study and the IGP process, as well as the importance of getting the NWAC involved earlier in the planning phases of system studies. Acadia Center supports a stronger integration between the IGP and NWA process, especially with respect to aligning timelines and involving the NWAC earlier, as projects and system studies are proposed, to more efficiently reach cooperative NWA solutions.

Respectfully submitted,



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