

On page 8, Section 7, lines 8-12, of H.715 as introduced on 1/23/2024, Stowe Electric and Hyde Park Electric support the intent of this section.

7 Sec. 7. **WETLAND** RULES UPDATE
8 On or before September 30, 2025, the Department of Environmental
9 Conservation shall update the wetland rules to exempt electric utilities from
10 required wetland permits for resiliency projects involving power line relocation
11 near or in roadside rights-of-way. The rules may still require best management
12 practices.
13 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE
14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

However, the section is too narrow for rural municipal utilities looking to implement line hardening and resiliency projects. Our understanding is that relocation “near or in roadside rights of way” would exclude Stowe Electric’s and Hyde Park Electric’s resiliency projects.

We have resiliency projects that would harden critical lines located off-road and cannot be moved roadside. As drafted Section 7 would not allow municipals to benefit from the exemption from wetland rules. This could delay projects, increase costs, and unnecessarily burden rural municipal electric departments.

This section can be amended to include additional resiliency projects by adding the highlighted language:

On or before September 30, 2025, the Department of Environmental Conservation shall update the wetland rules to exempt electric utilities from required wetland permits for resiliency projects involving existing power line rights of way or power line relocation near or in roadside rights-of-way. The rules may still require best management practices.

I’m able to respond to any questions from the Committee regarding this amendment.

Thank you.



Michael N. Lazorchak
Manager Regulatory Affairs
Stowe Electric Department