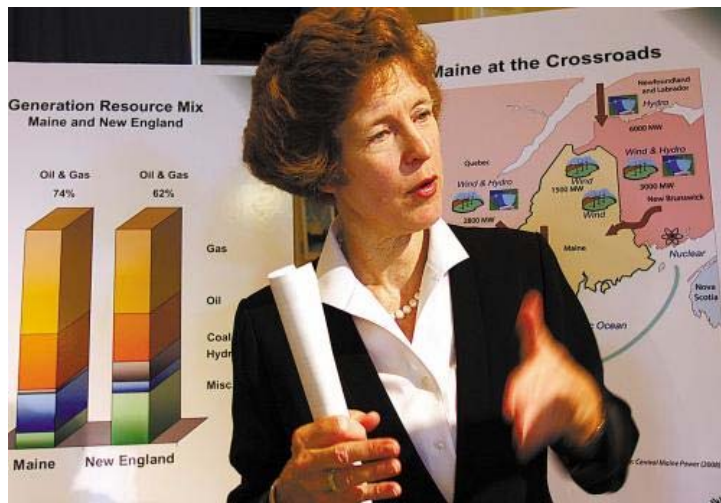


## Boost to Carrying Capacity

Ben Shingler, Telegraph-Journal

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Two private utilities companies in Maine say their plans for a \$1.9 billion overhaul of the power grid would give New Brunswick greater access to the New England market.

Central Maine Power and the Maine Public Service Company filed applications Tuesday with state regulators for two projects that would boost the carrying capacity of the state's electricity transmission lines.

The first project is a \$1.4-billion upgrade by Central Maine Power, a subsidiary of Energy East Corporation (NYSE:EAS), designed to improve the overall reliability of its power grid. The project would include a new 345-kilovolt transmission line from Orrington, Me., 15 miles south of Bangor, to Newington, N.H.

The second project, partnering Central Maine Power and Maine Public Service, a subsidiary of Maine & Maritimes corporation (AMEX:MAM), would build a new 345-kilovolt line connecting Aroostook County in northern Maine with the central part of the state. The project could cost upwards of \$500 million and begin in late fall 2010.

John Carroll, a spokesman for Central Maine Power, said the state's grid is badly in need of an upgrade, in particular to accommodate northern Maine's expected surge in energy production.

The transmission line bottleneck in northern Maine was made clear last month, when plans for biomass energy plant near Millinocket were scrapped after it was discovered the power grid capacity had maxed out.

Maine Public Service has received inter-connection requests for 1,250 megawatts of wind power, including a \$1.6-billion project by Horizon Wind that would generate 800 megawatts.

With several projects in the works in New Brunswick, Carroll said upgrades to the grid in Maine could help transmit electricity to the rest of New England.

The proposed plant at Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station would generate 1,100 megawatts of nuclear power, and a multitude of wind energy projects could produce even more.

In May, Premier Shawn Graham predicted the province could produce 2,500 megawatts to 4,000 megawatts of wind energy by 2025.

New Brunswick Energy Minister Jack Keir said that any improvement in Maine's power grid was positive for New Brunswick.

"What it does show everybody is that there is a willingness by the private sector to invest in energy," Keir said.

NB Power spokeswoman Heather MacLean said they would support any project that would improve the power grid in the region, but declined to comment on the specifics of the proposal.

Brent Boyles, president and CEO of Maine Public Service, said his company was in discussion with New Brunswick System Operator and other partners to connect the line in northern Maine to the northwestern part of New Brunswick.

If the economic feasibility studies to be launched this fall come back as expected, Boyle said new links between Maine and New Brunswick could be built shortly after 2010.

Carroll said the improvements to the overall reliability and capacity of Central Maine Power's grid will benefit New Brunswick's energy ambitions.

"This increases substantially the ability to ship power north and south," said Carroll.

"Beyond that, it's seen as a potential passage for flow in from Canada. If New Brunswick, Newfoundland or Quebec have power to give us we'll be able to take it."