



**Thomas A. Schatz, *President***  
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March 8, 2022

Maine Joint Energy, Utilities And Technology Committee  
Maine State Capitol  
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of the more than 9,516 members and supporters of Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) in Maine, I urge you to oppose [SB 1894](#), a bill which incentivizes and prioritizes government-owned networks over private or public/private partnerships for funding from the state's Internet Access Expansion Investment Fund through the ConnectMaine Authority.

As noted in the May 2021 [report](#), "The Folly of Government-Owned Networks," government-owned broadband networks (GONs) do more harm than good. They "have proven to be costly, unsustainable, and anticompetitive" and "divert taxpayer resources from higher priorities and fail to solve connectivity issues." Moreover, these networks have been unsustainable.

SB 1894 increases the risk of overbuilding and the construction of an ineffective broadband network. The bill's requirement that the Internet Access Expansion Investment Fund "must give priority to projects that assist state or local ownership of broadband infrastructure" limits the possible number of providers, whether public, private, or through public-private partnerships, who could help expand broadband to unserved or underserved regions in Maine. Broadband deployment cannot be dependent on a one-size-fits all approach that continues to leave many residents in rural communities without adequate broadband access. Rather, a technology and vendor neutral approach to deployment is the best route to take when tapping into taxpayer resources for broadband deployment. Unfortunately, the prioritization of government-owned networks in legislation like SB 1894, typically leaves residents dependent on unreliable and unsustainable broadband networks rather than allowing them to access the best options possible.

Instead of restricting state funds derived from federal allocations for broadband to GONs, the legislature should work toward easing costly restrictions on broadband deployment, including helping to improve application processing times for right-of-way access and reducing restrictions on pole attachments. Only through a technology and vendor neutral approach can Maine ensure the expansion of broadband access to unserved and underserved residents.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB 1894.

Sincerely,

*Tom Schatz*