

## Keep Baxter out of the Transmission Line Debate

On Friday, February 28, I opened my morning paper to find a two-page color advertisement from Hydro Quebec in support of the CMP transmission line. I was dumbstruck by the deception, which intentionally misled readers to believe that Baxter State Park is partnering with the power company.

I am the President of Friends of Baxter State Park, a nonprofit organization with a mission to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park in the spirit of its founder, Governor Percival Baxter. Our organization is not taking a position on the proposed CMP transmission line. The planned 53-mile corridor would cut through an area of the Maine Woods that is a long distance from Baxter State Park, so it is an issue we will leave to others to debate.

However, the use of Baxter State Park by Hydro Quebec to promote its development interests is not something we can ignore. The Park is cherished by Maine people, and its unique history is a source of great pride. The region's indigenous Wabanaki people consider Katahdin to be sacred ground. When a private company uses images of Baxter State Park seeking to curry public favor, we are compelled to speak out.

Governor Percival Baxter, Maine's visionary wilderness leader, devoted his life to creating the Park and gifting it to the people of Maine. This remarkable tale is a proud part of Maine history and one of the world's foremost conservation achievements.

From his years in state government, Governor Baxter understood well how private and political interests could undermine his goal of preserving Katahdin for the people of Maine. For that reason, he designed Baxter State Park to insulate it from politics. Through his deeds of trust, he set up an administrative structure that was independent from the Maine Legislature and an endowment to place no demands on the state budget. His wisdom and foresight have stood the test of time. The wilderness ideals that Governor Baxter espoused still guide management of the Park preserving its natural splendor and providing Maine people and visitors with extraordinary outdoor opportunities found in few other places.

Percival Baxter's most famous words ring truer today than ever: ***"Man is born to die. His works are short-lived. Buildings crumble, monuments decay, and wealth vanishes, but Katahdin in all its glory forever shall remain the mountain of the people of Maine."***

To use Baxter State Park as part of a campaign to build a transmission line through the Maine Woods is exactly the type of outside interference that Governor Baxter feared. It disrespects his legacy. So let the transmission line debate go on, but don't bring Baxter State Park and Percival Baxter into the fray. The Park, Katahdin and Percival Baxter's legacy are state treasures and a source of pride for Maine people. They should be revered, not manipulated for private or political gain.

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