

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

—
S.P. 361 - L.D. 1100

An Act To Support the Continued Access to Solar Energy and Battery Storage by Maine Homes and Businesses

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §3474, sub-§3 is enacted to read:

3. Interconnection rules. The commission shall adopt rules related to the interconnection of renewable capacity resources, as defined in section 3210-C, subsection 1, paragraph E, using solar power to investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities, as defined in section 3201, subsection 11-A, in a manner that supports the goals in this section and ensures:

A. The State's interconnection rules reflect nationally recognized best practices;

B. Customers affected by deficiencies in the rules are able to access timely resolution processes that do not place an undue burden on the customer; and

C. Investments in investor-owned transmission and distribution utility distribution upgrades related to load are coordinated with utility infrastructure upgrades required for the interconnection of renewable capacity resources using solar power.

Sec. 2. Solar energy resources interconnection evaluation. The Public Utilities Commission shall contract with an expert to evaluate near-term reforms to the State's standards, practices and procedures related to the interconnection of renewable capacity resources as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3210-C, subsection 1, paragraph E using solar power to investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities to:

1. Ensure that the timelines and requirements for interconnection do not unduly limit the ability of residential and nonresidential customers to install on-site solar energy generation and battery storage systems to offset a customer's electrical consumption and that interconnection costs for these customers are limited to interconnection facility upgrades and do not include the cost of distribution upgrades;

2. Improve the transparency of interconnection screens and upgrades for customer-sited generation; and

3. Ensure that dispute resolution processes for residential and nonresidential interconnection customers are fair and efficient and do not place a disproportionate burden of technical expertise and cost on these customers.

Within 6 months of the effective date of this Act, the commission shall conduct a proceeding and issue an order relating to the near-term reforms identified in the evaluation conducted under this section. Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the commission shall determine and adopt cost allocation methods for interconnection studies and upgrades that ensure on-site solar energy generators do not bear prohibitive costs for their projects to be studied by investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities and to be interconnected to the State's distribution system.

Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Public Utilities - Administrative Division 0184

Initiative: Provides an allocation for contracted services for a solar resources interconnection evaluation.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$254,693	\$0
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$254,693	\$0