

April 4, 2023



Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

RE: LD 1232 – An Act to Address Climate Change by Reducing Carbon Emissions from State Vehicles

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **favor of LD1232, An Act to Increase Adoption of Solar Power in Maine**. This bill is a critical step forward in promoting renewable energy and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. The Nature Conservancy has been leading conservation in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 300,000 acres. We also work across Maine to restore rivers and streams, partner with fishermen in the Gulf of Maine to rebuild groundfish populations, and develop innovative solutions to address our changing climate.

Solar power is an important part of our pathway to energy independence, and this bill's requirement for new buildings of at least 25,000 square feet to reserve 40% of applicable roof space for future installation of a solar energy system is a smart and sensible policy to help us achieve our renewable energy goals. By reserving space for solar panels, building owners can reduce the cost and hassle of future installation.

The bill also requires Maine's Public Utilities Commission to amend its interconnection rules to allow small electric power generators of up to a 100-kilowatt power rating to interconnect to a transmission and distribution utility under the commission's current level 1 screening criteria and process. This is a positive step forward that will make it easier for small-scale solar generators to connect to the grid. This policy change will encourage the development of distributed energy resources, which can help increase Maine's energy resilience, lower energy costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

By adopting this bill, Maine can take a leadership role in promoting renewable energy and combating climate change. With the increasing evidence of climate change's devastating effects on our planet, Maine has the opportunity to set an example for other states by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and renewable energy. Not only will this bill be beneficial for the environment, but it will also boost Maine's economy by creating jobs in the clean energy sector and reducing energy costs for individuals and businesses.

We urge you to support LD1232 and promote the development of solar energy in Maine. This is an important step forward in transitioning towards a more sustainable and resilient energy system that benefits both the environment and the economy.