



# Millinocket

Maine's Biggest Small Town

## State JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES, AND TECHNOLOGY

Testimony of Community Initiatives Director, Town of Millinocket

*May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

Testimony in Support

### **LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems.**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and honorable members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Amber Wheaton, and I am the Community Initiatives Director for the Town of Millinocket. I am writing in support of **LD 1986 An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems.**

Our community is currently exploring a community-owned, cooperative solar project that would expand the benefits of solar ownership to low and moderate-income homeowners and renters. LD 1986 would be supportive of community-benefitting projects like ours, because it would provide a structure to fairly allocate net energy billing costs and benefits, accounting for avoided transmission, distribution, and fossil fuel costs. Importantly, the legislation would also ensure that net energy billing benefits accrue to ratepayers.

I urge you to pass LD 1986 rather than LD 1347. While LD 1986 would support the continued growth of distributed energy in a way that is beneficial to low and moderate-income ratepayers, LD 1347 would revoke important components of net energy billing that make community-benefitting projects, such as ours, viable. In effect, LD 1347 would pose a significant barrier to low and moderate-income solar ownership in Maine and in doing so, prevent Maine communities from accessing federal funding for solar.



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In closing, please pass LD 1986, legislation which will improve net energy billing, benefit Maine ratepayers, allow Maine to leverage significant federal funds, and protect the viability of community-benefitting solar projects, such as ours. Thank you for your service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

Amber Wheaton

Community Initiatives Director

Town of Millinocket