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WINDHAM
LD 1986

My name is Geoff Sparrow and I live in Windham, Maine. I am a life-long Mainer and started my career in solar in 2006. It has been a wild and tumultuous ride over the past 17 years!

I strongly support LD 1986 as a forward looking solutions bill that prospectively alters the Distributed Generation solar program in Maine. This bill embraces and implements the hard work of the DG 2.0 stakeholder group. The most important aspect of this bill is that it is prospective and is not retroactive.

We cannot and should not support any legislation that retroactively alters our existing NEB program. You will see this harmful legislation in the recently amended bill LD 1347 for which there will be no opportunity for public testimony. This legislation is based on incorrect data and assumptions and tears apart all of the hard work and millions of dollars invested by renewable energy developers in the state over the past five years. Most projects in the DG queue are hung up in interconnection studies and will never see the light of day.

The fact that retroactive changes are being discussed is already hampering investment in our state. The consequences of a retroactive scenario would be devastating, resulting in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in investment for the people of Maine. This would have a ripple effect on jobs, tax revenue, landowner lease payments, construction spending, and overall community stability. Approving retroactive changes would essentially regress Maine's renewable energy policy by five years to a time when MW-scale project development was nearly non-existent.

A note on a previous question regarding the “cost” of the existing operational projects and projects in the queue. The 20+ cent rates are temporary as they are tied to the cost of Standard Offer electricity supply. The standard offer supply rates are predicted to drop significantly in 2024 because the cost of generation has normalized. To assume that the entire NEB rate is a cost is inaccurate. A kWh delivered by a solar project is a kWh that does not have to be sourced and paid for through traditional generation sources.

The proposed legislation of LD 1347 is actually worse than what we had before 2019 as it requires a significant portion of load “behind the meter” and also limits the number of offtakers to 10 or less. Practically speaking, this program would be useless and would not be utilized.

Thank you for your consideration.

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