

Ruby Newman
Bar Harbor
LD 1465

Testimony of Ruby Newman in opposition of LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and honorable members of the Energy, Utility, and Technology Committee. I am Ruby Newman and I am a college student residing in Maine. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to oppose LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing.

This bill seeks to pass regressive changes to net energy billing after this Legislature voted against prior attempts to roll back the program. Instead, last session, this Legislature passed LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems. The legislation passed last session addresses the structural issues associated with the first phase of net energy billing. As of this year, the PUC is requiring the utilities to account for the benefits of solar as well as the costs associated with NEB. It reduced the size of NEB-eligible projects, thereby reducing large-scale subscription solar development, while still incentivizing individual ratepayers, small business owners, and municipalities to adopt solar.

This bill does not seek to serve the best interests of Maine ratepayers but the utilities who oversee them. By requiring net energy billing credits to be applied solely to supply charges, a project owner would no longer be able to offset their entire electric bill. Thus, LD 1465 will put solar adoption out of reach for all except the most wealthy, disincentivizing the small and medium solar projects that benefit Maine ratepayers. This works in direct opposition to the renewable energy goals set forth by this legislature and the Maine Climate Council. As well, this bill seeks to attack a tariff program that is already curtailed without explaining how the proposed changes will interact with changes made by subsequent amendments to the tariff program. LD 1465 is an attempt to stifle a policy that has yet to take effect. Overall, this bill is regressive and will have negative impacts on Maine ratepayers and our climate goals.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to vote against the passage of LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing.