

Testimony of Jesse Dunbar 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 Jesse Dunbar, the Town Manager of the Town of Tremont. 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**.

In 2019, The Town of Tremont built a 153 kW solar array on an old landfill adjacent to the town office. By reducing the value of a net energy billing credit, this bill retroactively weakens our solar array's economic performance at the expense of our tax payers. Given that net energy billing is an important mechanism for incentivizing Maine residents, small businesses and municipalities to adopt solar, these proposed changes will put solar adoption out of reach for all except the most wealthy.

LD 1465 works against Maine's climate goals by making the adoption of solar energy unattractive. According to a Natural Resource Council of Maine report, Tremont is one of the twenty towns in Maine that will be most impacted by climate change. As a result, our selectboard passed a resolution pledging to decrease fossil fuel use. Net energy billing is an essential mechanism that allows Tremont to pursue our resolution. If our municipality cannot utilize net energy billing credits to offset distribution, transmission and secondary billing costs, solar energy will not provide enough benefit to cover the cost of construction of future projects.

Last session, this legislature passed **LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems**. This policy must take effect before any changes around net energy billing proceed. If these changes occur as presented in **LD 1465**, they will be costly to our ratepayers and our climate. 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**.