

Stan Skolfield
Gorham
LD 515

Dear Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 450, "An Act to Lower Electricity Costs by Repealing the Laws Governing Net Energy Billing." Like many hardworking Mainers, I am outraged by the skyrocketing electricity bills we are forced to pay, made worse by the so-called "solar tax." Every time another solar field is installed in Maine, my bill increases, and I am left wondering why my hard-earned dollars are being used to subsidize a program that disproportionately benefits out-of-state developers and Wall Street investment firms. This unjust enrichment of special interests is coming at the direct expense of Maine ratepayers, and it must stop.

Maine already has the sixth-highest electricity rates in the nation, according to MarketWatch, and adding this burdensome solar subsidy only worsens our situation. When you combine our already excessive property tax rates with our overall tax burden—the fourth-highest in the nation—it becomes clear that the people of Maine cannot afford yet another financial strain. As the Public Advocate testified last year, we are set to cover approximately \$220 million annually in solar subsidies for the next two decades—a total of \$4.4 billion. That is an outrageous sum that could be better spent supporting our families, businesses, and communities rather than enriching Wall Street.

Beyond the excessive financial burden, there are several other reasons why the solar tax must be repealed. First, it disproportionately harms low-income and elderly Mainers, who are already struggling to afford basic necessities. Forcing them to subsidize the electricity costs of wealthier homeowners and out-of-state investors is unfair and regressive. Second, it puts Maine businesses at a severe competitive disadvantage. High energy costs make it harder for small businesses to grow and create jobs, driving economic activity out of our state. Third, it fails to deliver on its promises of environmental and economic benefits. Instead of fostering energy independence, we are becoming more reliant on external developers and fluctuating subsidy schemes that do not guarantee long-term affordability or sustainability. Fourth, these solar farms and wind farms are a complete eyesore on Maine's beautiful landscape. Our state is known for its pristine natural beauty, yet we are allowing massive industrial energy projects to scar our countryside, ruining the scenic views that define our state's character and attract tourism. Finally, these alternative energy sources were supposed to reduce energy costs for Maine taxpayers, yet they are doing the exact opposite—driving up our bills and making electricity less affordable for everyone.

Maine residents should not be forced to shoulder the financial burden of a poorly designed policy that rewards out-of-state interests at our expense. The Legislature must take action to repeal this unfair solar tax and restore fairness to our energy system. I urge you to support LD 450 and protect the financial well-being of Maine families and businesses. Thank you for your time and consideration.