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Topsham
LD 257

Testimony in Opposition to
LD 32 An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing, LD 257 An Act to
Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing

by Nancy B Chandler February 21, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. I am a member of Topsham's Energy Committee which is completing a Climate Action Plan. I have followed this committee's work closely for three sessions, and written on energy for 1 1/2 years for the Times Record. Currently I am working with MSAD 75's science staff to educate students about their Mt Ararat's clean energy building. My family has lived in solar and wood heated homes in Maine with little to no fossil fuels for 44 years. I am writing in opposition to LD 32 and LD257 both of which seek to remove Maine's effective Net Energy Billing laws.

Over 100,000 home and business owners have invested in solar electric systems in Maine planning on the mutual benefits of lowered electric costs and helping to meet Maine's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Owners of solar systems sized these projects to meet their 1KW to 2KW electric needs and rightly expect to continue getting low cost electricity to pay back their investment. These 4 bills to repeal Net Energy Billing would deprive solar systems owners of future economic benefits from their investments and the public benefits of less air pollution and climate change mitigation. Maine should not take away the continued financial benefits of privately built electric systems from it's citizens, whose front investments should continue to provide them free electricity.

Net Energy Billing rules have been revised in the last 2 years to decouple electric payments from the cost of electricity and reduce payments to solar electric installers. No longer do solar developers receive large payments based on rising natural gas costs.

Solar and wind energy from windy areas in foothills and along shoreline are the most affordable forms of electricity compared to any of the fossil fuel produced electricity sources. Maine must continue it's pioneer efforts to meet our Maine Can't Wait Climate Plan goals of producing increased amounts of renewable energy and reducing our climate warming emissions.

Solar electricity produces \$1.29 of benefits for every \$1 invested. After loans are paid off, there are no monthly payments for it's production. Solar systems will last for 25 to 30 years, and still to be determined times after that. Individual panels in a home or small business array may need to be replaced to keep the system functioning at maximum electricity production. Solar panel design and production continue to improve rapidly with the cost of panels reducing dramatically.

1 to 2 MW rooftop, shed and ground mounted solar systems reduce the need for more transmission lines, by producing electricity right at the building that uses it. Thus with the accumulated electricity from small distributed sources, the utility is saved new lines to bring in large fixed source generators. Huge recent consumer interest in these investment which benefit the larger community as well was the installer should continue as solar panel prices are low. Hopefully the PUC will pressure Maine utilities to start pricing time of day use of electricity to reduce the expensive purchase of peak power. Higher payments to producers for peak time electricity delivered to the grid, allow Beverly, Massachusetts electric school bus fleet to feed into the grid at peak use time of day, and recharge their buses at night and midday at lower rates, thus producing a revenue for the town. The homeowner also should save paying delivery costs for solar electricity they produce on site.

Please vote against LD 32, LD257

Please vote to retain the current Net Energy Billing laws which work well to minimally incentivize renewable and affordable electricity generation.