

Stephen Martin
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LD 32

I am writing to express my strong opposition to this and the other 3 the bills to end Net Energy Billing (LD 257, LD 359, LD 450).

Attempts to cancel Net Energy Billing are based on the false claim that the solar program is leading to increased electricity costs for Mainers. Those cost increases are primarily the result of the rising price of natural gas and storm recovery costs from last year's devastating storms in January.

According to Maine's Public Utilities Commission, existing projects currently in operation have resulted in net ratepayer benefits of \$2.1 million in 2021 and \$12.5 million in 2022. In 2023, these projects were forecasted to have net ratepayer benefits of approximately \$30 million during the next three years. For every \$1.00 spent, a UPC analysis found that ever dollar invested in Net Energy billing results in \$1.29 in ratepayer benefits.

More than 100,000 Mainers currently have solar installations, providing clean energy to reduce carbon emissions and limit climate change. Those people purchased solar systems to reduce their carbon footprint with an understanding from the legislature that utilities credit them for the electricity they produce but don't use at the moment of production. The reduced net electricity consumption then helps offset the cost of the installation. To cancel Net Energy Billing would break the state's contract with those Mainers. It would eliminate any the financial benefit from the installation, adding an additional financial burden on those Mainers and unfairly penalize them for their attempt to help mitigate the climate crisis.

Furthermore, the solar industry has shouldered millions of dollars in upgrades to the grid with these projects adding hundreds of jobs to Maine's economy.

To cancel Net Energy Billing would also eliminate any incentive to install solar energy systems. Residential and commercial solar projects would cease. This will likely result in a severely negative impact on the Maine economy with the loss of hundreds of good paying jobs in the solar industry.

While the Net Energy Billing system may need some ammendment, to cancel it would be an irresponsible step backwards and away from our goal to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

Please oppose the bills to end Net Energy Billing (LD 32, LD 257, LD 359, LD 450).

Thank you.