

Testimony

On

LD 32 and 257

An Act to Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing

Presented on 25 February 2025

To

The Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

The Honorable Senator Mark Lawrence:

The Honorable Representative Melanie Sachs:

And Distinguished Members on the EUT Committee:

My name is Kevin Bushey, a resident of Ashland, and I am the Interim Town Manager of Ashland. I offer this testimony in support of LDs 32 and 257. I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony on behalf of the Town of Ashland Town Council. The passage of Net Energy Billing by the Legislature in 2019 has dramatically impacted local businesses, families and particularly families on fixed incomes. A typical resident with a household meter and a barn/shed or outbuilding meter is now paying an additional \$467 for a public policy fee in their electric bills. Without some relief, families and businesses will continue to struggle here in Northern Maine.

From a financial perspective, the loss of farms and open spaces that have been turned into solar farms have decreased our tax revenues. While these two bills don't address the tax situation, it's important to note the exemption of personal property taxes on solar farms in Ashland means the loss of \$171,000 in taxable personal property equipment. Towns in this area looking to entice forest products industries to invest in plants and equipment continue to be less attractive due to these NEB costs. We are aware of one town's manufacturing facility having to pay \$77,000 a month for these NEB fees.

For the benefit of all residents and businesses, it's time that the legislature fix this self inflicted problem and provide relief to all. Northern Maine towns must be competitive to attract new businesses. Fixed income residents need relief. Now's the time to fix the wrongs of NEB by passing LD 32 and LD 257.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Bushey

Interim Town Manager, Ashland

PO Box 910, Ashland, ME

[manager@townoashland.org](mailto:manager@townoashland.org)

207-435-2311