

February 27, 2025

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair  
Representative Melanie Sachs, Chair  
Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

***Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 32, LD 257, LD 450, and LD 515***

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

Please consider this testimony in strong opposition to LD 32, LD 257, LD 450, and LD 515. The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is a national Coalition of businesses and non-profits working to expand customer choice and access to solar for all American households and businesses through community solar. Our mission is to empower every American energy consumer with the option to choose local, clean, and affordable solar.

The four bills before you today would entirely wipe the existence of the Net Energy Billing program from the state's laws, leaving over 16,000 renewable energy projects serving over 110,000 Maine customers completely in the lurch. Community solar subscribers have come to rely on the 10-20% discounts they receive through their participation in NEB to manage rising energy costs resulting from reliance on volatile fossil fuels, repairing infrastructure from devastating storms, and the costs of building and repairing transmission across New England. The level of disruption this bill would cause - voiding existing contracts for operating projects - is an extreme and unprecedented response that misdiagnoses the problem of rising energy costs and *worsens* the outcome for Maine ratepayers and citizens.

These bills are a dangerous weapon aimed at the wrong target. Net Energy Billing is working to deliver direct bill savings to these customers, and to deliver broad benefits to all Maine ratepayers. The outcome of LD 1986 from 2023 is a report that demonstrates that these benefits are real, monetizable, and approximately \$30 million/year greater than the ratepayer impacts of the program. Maine households and businesses across the state recognize those benefits. Many customers participate in NEB not only for the bill savings, but because they want to support local, Maine-made, renewable energy. Nationally, over two-thirds of American households do not have access to rooftop solar - their roofs are not suitable, they are renters, and/or they do not have the ability to purchase or finance their own rooftop systems. These customers still deserve the opportunity to choose renewable energy and energy independence.

This is of course not the first time such a proposal has come before this committee, nor will these be the last bills you will hear that deal with the Net Energy Billing program. We encourage you to focus on moving forward, not backward with retroactive rollbacks that harm Maine customers, landowners, and workers, and invite costly litigation.

In a time of significant uncertainty in the energy and the financial markets, we strongly discourage you from actions such as in these bills that will wreak havoc on Maine's energy economy, sending chilling signals that Maine is a risky place to invest. Distributed solar is a bright spot in the current environment - a resource that can be built quickly, in many cases without any federal permits, and that encourages domestic energy production, energy competition, and choice. We look forward to working with you this session to improve programs and opportunities to continue to deploy distributed, renewable energy.

We urge the committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on all four bills.

Sincerely,

Kate Daniel  
Northeast Regional Director  
Coalition for Community Solar Access