



**Chairman Lawrence, Chairwoman Sachs, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology committee.**

My name is Brian Langley, I am the owner of the Union River Lobster Pot in Ellsworth, and am submitting this testimony in support of LD 32 and LD 257 as I believe the Maine business community is in desperate need of relief in our light bills and the repeal of net energy billing, is a good first step.

The Union River Lobster Pot is a seasonal restaurant—we like to get open by Mid-June and we like to stay open through Columbus Day weekend. Our schedule is relevant to today's discussion on a repeal of the solar tax, as I must take the extraordinary move of turning off power in the off season to avoid the \$1,400 per month T&D and Public Policy Charge that we incur when **even without a single light on.**

During my ten years serving Maine in both the House and Senate, I collaborated with members of both parties to find practical solutions that support Maine businesses. I have consistently supported solar energy and voted in favor of it multiple times. However, had I and others been presented with the chart CMP shared in their testimony today—showing that small businesses like mine bear the cost and that Versant is charging me nearly \$500 per month in Public Policy Charges, while McCrum, the company I purchase French fries from, pays \$50,000 per month in these charges—we would never have supported net energy billing.

The reality of the return on investment has not matched the promises we were given. However, we often struggle to acknowledge when something hasn't worked out as intended.

Every week, the news reports yet another iconic restaurant shutting its doors. Long-standing legacy businesses that have served their communities for decades are disappearing. Why? It's death by a million cuts—**and a 67% increase in my energy costs from 2023 to 2024 is just one of the challenges that make it hard to keep the doors open.**

Maine is a tough place to do business. It's a short season, we are in a difficult labor market, and we rely on good weather to bring folks here to visit. We don't need to add additional hurdles to business owners who are already struggling to stay in the black numbers at the end of the year. I'm happy to share my electric bills with members of this committee. I just ask you-PLEASE-find a way to repeal or amend this tax. Folks all across Maine are teetering on the verge of failure and this relief would help them get through the winter. Thank you for your time and attention.