

Ed Geis
Camden
LD 257

Dear EUT Committee:

As a Maine homeowner who installed rooftop solar on my own home and strongly advocates for clean, locally-produced affordable energy for all Mainers, I urge you to reject LD 257 as well as LD 32. Doing away with Net Energy Billing entirely would be a mistake and would cost Mainers in the long run.

It goes without saying that homeowners like myself and other "behind the meter" participants in net energy billing would essentially have the rug pulled out from under us if NEB is simply cancelled. Thousands of Mainers invested in solar arrays either for their own homes or in small solar cooperatives, counting on the kWh credits promised by NEB to make these investments affordable. To suddenly renege on these agreements would create a good deal of financial hardship for many of these folks.

But more importantly, Maine needs to encourage more investment in clean energy like solar and eliminating NEB would stifle this investment. The discussion around NEB should be around how to improve the program to make it as equitable and fair as possible to all ratepayers, not simply gut it.

Homeowners, small business, and small-scale locally-owned solar cooperatives are not the problem and should not be penalized. I understand that the tariff rate component of NEB, involving larger solar farms often backed by out-of-state investors, has created unanticipated expenses that have contributed toward higher electricity rates. The Legislature has tried to address this issue and should continue to look at ways to further improve NEB policy.

As the report by SAE to the PUC presented last December made clear, the benefits of NEB outweigh the costs.

I'd like to see the Legislature look at ways to make rooftop solar and small local cooperatives available to low-income Mainers, and to make power more affordable for everyone.

Eliminating NEB would be a mistake.

Thank you.