

Good Day Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Energy, Utilities & Technology Committee, my name is Steve Dobson.

I am on the board of directors of Aroostook County Tourism, and the Maine Tourism Association.

I am here today to advocate for a major change to the Net Energy Billing Program. I am sure you will hear today the difficulty Net Energy Billing is causing to all businesses in the State of Maine. This includes all business from Mom & Pop places to large manufacturing plants.

Net Energy Billing is a huge burden to everyone who buys electricity in the state. In Aroostook County I believe it is even more of a burden.

In Aroostook the Standard Offer that everyone has to purchase is only offered through New Brunswick Power, and nobody has any power to negotiate lower price. And as I understand it, NEB is based on the rate and your power usage.

I spoke with a business owner who pays \$ 700,000 in NEB cost yearly. Just to name a few I am sure McCain's, Huber, Irving Lumber, Naturally Potatoes, plus all the

potato famers pay a hefty fee. Also Northern Light HealthCare is being put in a very bad position because of NEB. I was here a couple of Tuesdays ago when the legislature was discussing Medicaid, so the hospitals can be paid. The AR Gould was mentioned a few times. To my knowledge they still have not been paid.

There are many people in The County working very hard to make life better for everyone. I personally have been trying to do this through tourism. As you may or may not know, ALL Businesses are tourism businesses, and all businesses are affected negatively by NEB, except the solar people. I am sure today you are going to hear a lot of facts and figures about how negatively businesses and families are effected by NEB. I am also sure you are going to hear from many people who think that NEB is a good thing.

However I would like to speak to you today as a 74 year old grandfather of 23 great grand children with 3 more on the way. All of them 5 and under. My grandchildren's families are not unlike many other families in The County. They all are hardworking people. They all have jobs. I have one grandson that is working two jobs and

his wife babysits in their home. They all take pride in their family and try to do what is best for their family, community, and church.

I watch them all each month as they manage to pay all of their bills. They buy groceries, (that are more expensive each week), pay the oil bill through the winter months, pay the health insurance, and pay a light bill that after they pay four or five bills, this adds up to more than their real estate taxes, and on and on.

I am also aware of many senior citizens struggling to stay in their homes so they do not lose their independence. Some of them have spent 60 or 70 years in their home. Because of the cost of living, these people are struggling and NEB is adding to that cost.

During my conversations with local town managers, they are upset that they cannot tax these solar farms. Even though there are millions of dollars of equipment setting in their community. In my opinion this is just another burden to all the citizens and businesses of Maine

What really upsets me more than anything about the NEB is this appears to be a scheme developed with good

intentions but very little forethought and we are now paying for it. This solar development scheme is benefitting a few wealthy people that are mostly from out of state, at the expense of everyone else in the state.

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In my opinion Net Energy Billing needs to be dramatically changed or disposed of. People and businesses need relief and this is just one way to get it done.

I am sure you are going to hear from many people who feel NEB is a necessary program. In my perspective I do not see that. I look forward to hearing their testimony so I can learn, what is so good about this program that people have to struggle to keep it.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak to this very important issue

Steve Dobson