



Dear Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

In response to LD 32, LD 257, LD 259 and LD 450.

Maine's Net Energy Billing (NEB) law has been put into place in order to encourage citizens and companies that would not normally invest in solar, to invest in it. If the goal is to get more solar, then it is working. But it is being done at a far greater cost than anybody ever thought it would be. If your goal is to have 100% of Maine's energy come from renewable energy sources, NEB will not accomplish this in time, and there are far better, far cheaper and more efficient ways to achieve this desired outcome.

The reality is that Net Energy Billing is not just paying Maine's solar customers for the energy they put back into the grid, it is paying them a premium price for that energy. The NEB law requires utilities to pay large solar communities, companies, and individuals' top dollar for their solar energy and then they proceed to sell that energy at the going rate, taking a loss. That "stranded cost" is then passed directly onto the non-solar customers, increasing the cost of energy dramatically in Maine.

Maine has some of the highest energy costs in the nation, and more than double the cost of energy in some states. The energy problem doesn't end here, the cost of Maine's high energy prices are built into every price for services and products all over the state. Every company that does business in Maine has energy costs, and the higher this monthly price tag grows, the more they are forced to pass those costs on to everyday Mainers.

I spoke to a business owner just last week who runs a small/medium sized industrial business that uses a fair amount of energy. Their energy bill has gone from \$6,000/month to \$15,000/month now because of the failed energy policies currently in place. This specific business has competitors that are based in other states with lower energy costs, so offsetting energy costs by raising prices is not a real option. They may be forced to close their doors, impacting their customers, their employees, the people of Maine, and tax revenue. Stories like this are happening all over the state and will continue to have an overall very negative financial impact on the state. NEB is short-sighted and is failing Maine.

Businesses and families all over Maine right now are faced with the choice of shutting down or leaving the state, and we are seeing this happen at a record pace. The longer this happens, the more desperate an already desperate situation will get.

We can't undo the damage that has been done, but we can make the right decisions going forward with the indisputable information that we have in front of us now.

I urge all the members of this committee to Vote to remove Net Energy Billing in Maine, and to vote for better energy policies for ALL Mainers.

Sincerely,

Robert Wessels

Robert Wessels
Maine Gubernatorial Candidate
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