

To: Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

From: Pema Lhundrup

Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025

Opposition to L.D. 32: “An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing,” **L.D. 257:** “An Act to Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing,” **L.D. 450:** “An Act to Lower Electricity Costs by Repealing the Laws Governing Net Energy Billing,” and **L.D. 515:** “An Act to Reverse Recent Changes Made to the Law Governing Net Energy Billing and Distributed Generation”

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Pema Lhundrup, and I am a student at the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine. I write to strongly oppose the repeal of Maine’s Net Energy Billing (NEB) laws, as proposed by the aforementioned bills. NEB is a critical policy that expands access to renewable energy, reduces energy costs, and ensures a more stable and reliable electricity system for Maine residents. This program allows thousands of households, like mine, to generate clean energy, usually through solar, while receiving fair compensation for the excess electricity they provide to the grid. It is an economically efficient and environmentally responsible policy that protects consumers from energy market volatility.

As a college student, balancing tuition, rent, and rising utility costs is an ongoing challenge. Accessible Energy affordability is not an abstract issue, it is a daily struggle for many Mainers. This winter, when temperatures dropped to 23°F, my housemates and I turned up the heat to stay warm. However, our fuel supply quickly dwindled, and due to scheduling and weather constraints, the company responsible for refills could not reach our island for weeks. This forced us to make a difficult decision: continue heating our home and risk depleting our supply entirely or ration our fuel and endure the cold. Worse still, if we had used up too much fuel, we would have faced an additional \$200 fee to restore the generator.

This is not an isolated incident but a reality that thousands of Mainers experience every year. If our home had been enrolled in Net Energy Billing, we could have benefited from affordable, reliable energy through rooftop or community solar. Instead, we were left at the mercy of a fossil-fuel-dependent system, one that often fails.

Repealing NEB would strip Mainers of the opportunity to participate in local energy generation that strengthens our grid and provides cost-effective, clean energy. It would worsen energy insecurity, particularly for low-income households, and force consumers to remain dependent on unpredictable, high-cost fossil fuels. As a Maine resident who has personally experienced the shortcomings of our current energy system, I urge the Committee to reject these bills and protect Net Energy Billing for the benefit of all Mainers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Pema Lhundrup