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March 14, 2025

Testimony Neither for nor against:

LD 32: An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing

LD 257: An Act to Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing

LD 450: An Act to Lower Electricity Costs by Repealing the Laws Governing Net Energy Billing

LD 515: An Act to Reverse Recent Changes Made to the Law Governing Net Energy Billing and Distributed Generation

LD 359: An Act to Prohibit Net Energy Billing by Certain Customers

Greetings Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Alf Anderson, and I am an Associate State Director for Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan social mission organization with more than 200,000 members across the state.

Please accept this late filed testimony NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST the bills submitted to date that seek to repeal Net Energy Billing (NEB).

AARP Maine has opposed the 2019 legislation that vastly expanded our community solar program primarily because it is too expensive and poorly designed. Our recommendation is to reduce the overly generous subsidies for unregulated solar developers under the community solar program. That program needs reform that is unlikely to result in outright repeal but should definitely be adjusted to lower subsidies being paid for by ratepayers. That program is in law and the law should be changed to reduce the impact on low-income and fixed-income ratepayers.

It would also be reasonable to reform NEB for rooftop solar customers to ensure that they pay a reasonable portion of distribution service and public policy costs, but only for new customers on a going forward basis. Current rooftop solar customers should be grandfathered from any changes to NEB.

Regarding the much-cited benefits of NEB, we would like to point out that all the studies have concluded that the benefits in terms of electricity rates do NOT exceed the costs imposed on electricity customers. The excess benefits being cited by many

are societal and economic benefits like reducing greenhouse gases, pollution, health impacts, and employment. If these benefits are indeed occurring as a result of this unprecedented subsidy for solar, all or at least part of those costs should be borne by taxpayers and not ratepayers. Electricity is a regressive means to provide economic and social benefits since the percentage of household income required to pay for essential electricity service for lower income households far exceeds that percentage of income by upper income households. This contrasts with the more progressive structure of income taxes that are designed to reduce tax burdens on lower income households.

A 2024 survey by AARP Maine found that only one in five Maine residents over the age of 45 say their elected officials are doing enough to keep electricity affordable. I am attaching a summary of the survey results to this testimony.

Now is the time to make meaningful reforms to this program to reduce the burden on ratepayers from this overly generous program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on these important bills.

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Utilities are a Pressing Issue for Maine Adults Age 45+

Vital Voices: A Survey on Issues that Impact Maine Adults Age 45 and Older, 2024

An increase in electricity bills would be a problem for many Maine residents, particularly among lower income households

43%

Minor Problem



38%

Major Problem

Major Problem, by income:

<\$25k

63%

\$25k-
<\$75k

43%

\$75k+

18%

17%

Not a Problem

67%

Two-thirds have seen their electricity bill go up in the past 12 months

Only one in five (20%) Maine residents say their elected officials are doing enough to keep electricity affordable

78%

78% agree

the state should look for ways to limit electricity rates, as they are pushing for renewable energy expansion

68%

68% oppose

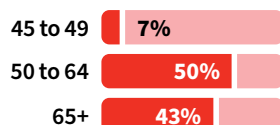
elected officials directing electric companies to raise rates to pay for new solar power infrastructure

Vital Voices

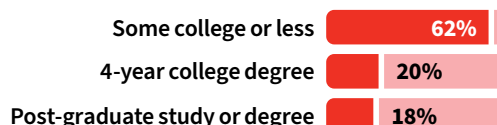
Fast Facts of Maine Adults Age 45+



Age



Education



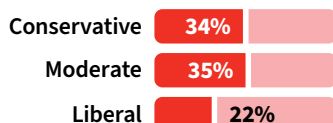
Gender



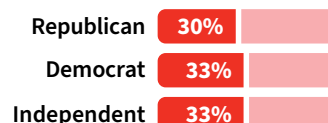
Caregiver Status



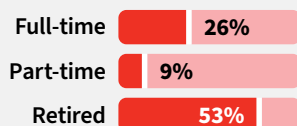
Political Views



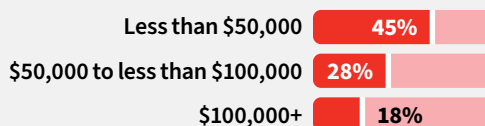
Political Party



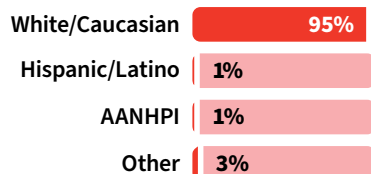
Employment



Annual Household Income



Race/Ethnicity



Marital Status



For more information, contact specific advisor:
Kate Bridges, KBridges@aarp.org
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00524.445>

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38%
AARP Member

20%
Veteran

3%
LGBTQ

34%
Disabled

94%
Registered to vote