

To: The Honorable Mark K. Lawrence
The Honorable Melanie F. Sachs
Members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

Date: 10 April 2025

Re: LD 1321 - An Act to Reform Net Energy Billing by Establishing Limitations on the Programs' Duration and Compensation

I am speaking in OPPOSITION to the following legislative bill LD 1321

I'm Ted Colburn, a Vietnam Veteran, and my wife and I have farm in Waterford.
Solar panels help to provide electricity to our farm through the net billing kWh Credit program.

Net Energy Billing is a positive investment for Maine. It makes it possible for Mainers to invest their hard-earned money into developing a cleaner, more resilient place to live with reduced reliance on out of state and out of country influences.

By an independent analysis by Sustainable Energy Advantage, LLC for the MPUC dated 1 April 2024, Maine receives more from the investment in NEB than it expends. Especially when you look at the kWh Credit program the benefits are about double the costs as shown in Figure 3 and 4 considering both the behind the meter and in front of the meter benefits. It's hard to beat that in any investment. It also helps to prepare our state for better living for our children and grandchildren.

The homeowner, farmer, or whomever has the solar panels receives benefit by having the power systems serve as a battery, but also the power company receives a benefit by receiving power when the sun is shining. When this occurs at peak demand times the solar source is at a lower cost than the peak generation costs and thus saves ratepayers. Peak generation costs can be several times the standard rate. It makes sense for the rate payers to receive that savings.

There are other savings also delineated in the above report. The power can be used more locally where it is produced reducing the electrical load on the distribution network. The investment in solar around the state brings good jobs to Mainers. Solar around the state improves air quality by reducing combustion generation of electricity. Where combined with EVs, or heat pumps, solar can reduce community levels of hydrocarbons in the local air.

To potentially better fit the PV production to the "Duck Curve" (usage with solar) one suggestion for future ground fixed systems is to have an incentive to have them face towards the southeast or southwest. Shifting from south will provide more energy toward the higher morning and evening state electrical demands, without significant reduction in energy generated. Our barn faces SW and it was still worthwhile installing on our roof.

Additionally, I am volunteering on the founding board of a local community power initiative. The initiative, the MCPC (Maine Community Power Cooperative) has the objective to have at least half of its subscriber-members be low- or medium-income families, and earnings generated be returned to the members once the system is operating sufficiently. Solar in Maine is not just for those that have good exposure to the sun, or have deep pockets, and the economic benefits and power can stay in Maine and stay with ratepayers.

I ask that you keep NEB alive and well and keep the property tax exemption continuing. It's the prudent thing to do for all Mainers.

Thank you for your consideration and thank you for your dedication to Maine.