

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now!

Date: April 10, 2025

Re: Public comment in opposition to LD 1321

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Ezra Sassaman and I'm writing from my hometown of Bar Harbor. I represent [Maine Climate Action Now!](#) (MCAN) as the organization's Advocacy Coordinator.

MCAN represents 15 nonprofits across the state united by a desire to progress our state forward – and many of our member organizations are passionate about energy justice. For that reason, I am testifying in opposition to LD 1321 and in continued support of the state's current Net Energy Billing (NEB) program.

We have followed the conversation about NEB for years. Like most initiatives, NEB has costs and benefits. We believe opponents of this program are over-simplifying and exaggerating the costs of NEB while ignoring its benefits.

To figure out whether a program is working or not, it is a great idea to collect data on it. Last year, the legislature did just that, directing the Public Utilities Commission to provide an analysis of Maine's NEB program in 2023.¹ Page 2 of this report does a good job of outlining the costs of this program compared to its benefits. The report found that, in 2023, the state's NEB program had a net benefit of around \$30 million for ratepayers. This data further supports what we have suspected all along – Net Energy Billing is being used as a scapegoat and an overly simple solution to the more complex problem of electric bill increases.

Questions being asked by NEB opponents – Why are Mainers' electric bills going up so much each year? Why are so many people struggling to make ends meet? How can people on fixed incomes afford their basic needs? – are all valid and important to explore further.

Proponents of changes to the NEB program need to prove altering this program will strengthen the program and actually make utility bills less – not more – affordable. Due to the current program's long-term benefits to grid infrastructure, community resilience, self-sufficiency, and the environment, we believe the program is working as intended and will continue to do so without a need for change.

For the following reasons, I ask you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1321. Thank you for your time.

¹Sustainable Energy Advantage, LLC, "[Analysis of 2023 Net Benefits of Net Energy Billing Program](#)", April 1, 2024.