



Sophie Warren
P.O. Box 1
Scarborough, ME 04070
Phone: (207) 450-0765
Sophie.Warren@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 STATE HOUSE STATION AUGUSTA,
MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

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Testimony of Representative Sophie Warren Supporting
**L.D. 1242, An Act to Incentivize the Construction of Solar Carport Canopies
and Solar Chargers at Highway Picnic Areas**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Good morning, Chair Nangle, Chair Crafts, and respected colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of **L.D. 1242, An Act to Incentivize the Construction of Solar Carport Canopies and Solar Chargers at Highway Picnic Areas.**

When Representative Golek asked me to cosponsor LD 1242, I was more than happy to do so. Learning more about the reasons that this bill represents a positive and equitable step in our efforts to fight climate change make me proud to cosponsor and led me to want to speak to you in support to offer further support in what this bill could represent.

LD 1242 is not only good for the environment and the economy, but it also speaks to the values of accessibility and equity. As EV adoption grows, ensuring access to reliable charging infrastructure in all parts of the state, not just in urban centers, is critical. Highway picnic areas are strategically located and highly visible, making them ideal for this kind of development. This bill ensures that Maine's shift toward clean transportation is inclusive, well-planned, and accessible to residents and tourists alike. By passing LD 1242, the legislature can help build a cleaner, more connected Maine for generations to come.

These charging stations, powered by solar energy, would allow EV drivers to travel across the state with greater confidence in light of 'range anxiety' concerns, which is a fact we should not under appreciate. In acknowledgement of our ambitious climate goals, it is these kinds of proactive investments and thinking that can encourage EV adoption by addressing the highly practical concerns faced by some at the prospect of electric over internal combustion vehicles, making this bill's proposal both urgent and commendable.

By directing the Department of Transportation to offer no-cost leases at highway picnic areas for the installation of solar-powered EV charging stations, the bill encourages public-private partnerships that bring essential electric vehicle infrastructure to highly public, easily accessible, and also particularly more rural and underserved areas. The bill's provision allowing businesses and individuals to forgive the sales and use tax on materials used to build solar canopies and EV chargers is a smart economic incentive. This tax relief acknowledges the upfront costs involved in

clean energy projects and offers a realistic pathway for more stakeholders, especially small businesses and local developers, to invest in renewable infrastructure. Rather than providing direct subsidies, which can be fiscally challenging, particularly in the current economic realities, this measure offers long-term financial feasibility while boosting private investment in sustainable energy solutions.

The inclusion of solar carport canopies further amplifies the benefits of this bill. These canopies not only provide renewable energy for electric vehicles but also offer practical advantages such as shelter from sun and snow, important considerations in a state like Maine. The dual functionality of these structures maximizes the utility of public spaces, particularly picnic areas, which already serve as rest and recreation spaces for the public. Encouraging the construction of solar canopies supports clean energy jobs, provides needed infrastructure, and helps integrate sustainability into the everyday travel experience.

LD 1242 promotes environmental and economic benefits while emphasizing accessibility and equity. This strategic development supports Maine's transition to sustainable travel inclusively and visibly, while doing so in an economically sound way. By placing EV charging stations at highway picnic areas across the state, the bill ensures that clean transportation infrastructure reaches both urban and rural areas while also addressing the critical concerns of range anxiety.

Thank you for your time and consideration this testimony and of Rep. Golek's bill.