
**Testimony in Support of LD 1966, An Act to Improve Access to Community Solar
Programs in the State**

**To the Committee on the Energy, Utilities and Technology
by Jack Shapiro, Climate and Clean Energy Program Director
October 30, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Jack Shapiro, and I am the Climate and Clean Energy Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM). NRCM is a nonpartisan membership organization that has been working for more than 65 years to protect, restore, and conserve Maine's environment, now and for future generations. On behalf of our nearly 24,000 members and supporters, NRCM testifies in support of LD 1966, An Act to Improve Access to Community Solar Programs in the State.

One of the original purposes of Maine's community solar programs was to provide access to solar energy and solar savings for Maine households who, because they did not own a home, did not have a suitable rooftop, or did not have the up-front resources, could not install solar on their own residences. Today, when Maine households are facing high electricity prices — which are forecast to rise in just a few months due to our continued reliance on natural gas for power generation¹ — it makes sense to prioritize access to these important clean energy programs for low- and moderate-income households. This can provide savings to customers who need them most, while supporting the transition over time to a more diverse renewable energy supply free from fossil fuel price volatility.

LD 1966 has a number of additional beneficial provisions:

- **Consolidated billing.** This bill's requirements to offer consolidated billing will reduce confusion for community solar customers, and reduce barriers for low- and moderate-income customers in particular, for whom any additional bills are more likely to represent an obstacle, even if program participation results in overall savings.
- **Clear and accurate description of public policy charges.** There are numerous public policies directly related to electricity that have program costs that appear on utility customers' bills. Unfortunately, it is often the case that the benefits of those programs accrue elsewhere, or are realized as avoided costs. Electric bills, alongside their core purpose, functionally serve as a free communications platform for electric utilities, and there have been instances where utility customers are led to believe that certain clean energy programs are significant electricity cost drivers when in fact public policy charges cover a broad category of costs. This does not serve the public interest or public

understanding, and an accurate and comprehensive explanation of public policy charges should be standard practice, as this bill would require.

- **Cost transparency.** Utilities are currently allowed to issue sometimes substantial “administrative charges” to customers with little detail included, making assessing the accuracy or fairness and/or challenging the charges difficult. Requiring better disclosure is a prudent change in favor of transparency.

Regardless of ones opinion of Maine’s community and rooftop solar programs, prioritizing cost savings for low- and moderate-income households, ensuring that the information that ratepayers are receiving is accurate, and that our utilities are being transparent and accountable to customers as they operate our shared grid in the public interest are all common-sense changes.

NRCM supports LD 1966, and we urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you.