



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

PO Box 3760
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: (207) 761-5616
www.sierraclub.org/maine

To: Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
From: Matthew Cannon, Sierra Club Maine
Date: January 3, 2026
Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 1730: An Act to Make Small, Portable, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis**

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

I write on behalf of the Sierra Club Maine Chapter, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million supporters and members nationwide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable future for all people. To that end, we present this testimony in support of LD 1730.

This bill provides more choice and cost savings to Mainers by enabling the simple technology of plug-in solar. Maine households saw a 36.3% electricity price increase between May 2024 and May 2025. Our state's households face some of the highest electricity rates in New England. Rising costs hit low- and moderate-income families, renters, and seniors hardest. Low-income families in Maine spend twice the recommended share of income on electricity. Plug-in solar provides immediate relief on electricity bills without state or federal subsidies.

Plug-in solar also boosts distributed generation with a highly granular approach of activating minimal solar generation at residences. Distributed generation reduces strain on Maine's grid and improves reliability statewide. This is a small amount of energy generation per household, but in aggregate it can serve as an important resiliency tool. Plug-in solar paired with small batteries can provide backup power during outages. Additionally, it strengthens resilience for rural and island communities that often face storm-related disruptions and rely on costly diesel generation.

As a renter in Portland, I neither have the ability to build on my landlord's rooftop, nor the funds. What I do have is the strong interest to stop using fossil fuels, but don't know how,

and feel powerless. Enacting this bill would allow me to actualize my goals, and provide me the freedom to expand my renewable electricity sources without needing the electrical grid system that continues to increase in cost to the benefit of shareholders, not Maine ratepayers. Because this bill would only allow a marginal amount of power, it would also make me even more aware of my energy usage and ensure that I conserve, saving me money and ensuring more electricity is used for the growing demands of the grid. With a much cheaper price tag than rooftop solar, the clean energy transition becomes more possible for more families. However, allowing this program doesn't mean people will adopt solar; we still need to incentivize solar adoption even more, ensuring that people benefit from this program, in order to transition off fossil fuels. Though this bill is budget neutral, we do hope there is a way at some point to provide more funding for more subsidies to those in need to purchase plug-in solar.

LD 1730 ensures Maine stays on track with its climate goals by democratizing access to solar, lowering emissions, and expanding generation of and participation in clean energy, even without federal subsidies. Plug-in solar is a widely marketed, mature technology needing nothing more than a 110-volt household plug for a solar panel or two and is much like a home appliance. Plug-in solar is widely adopted in Germany and across Europe, where millions of households already benefit. Other states have adopted or proposed this legislation. Utah is notable as a Republican-led state. For those concerned about ratepayer costs, these systems do not use net energy billing. Given the simplicity of plug-in solar, the benefits it provides to ratepayers, especially in multi-family residences, and the benefits it bestows on the grid, we strongly recommend that legislation be passed to allow easy adoption. Please pass LD 1730.

Matt Cannon
State Conservation & Energy Director
Sierra Club Maine