

Faith Barnes
Brunswick
LD 1730

Dear Senator Grohoski and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support LD 1730 An Act to Make Small, Portable, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis

As a person of faith in the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church, I believe that we are all interdependent. As a UU I honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge my place in it. All existence includes all the animals, plants, and humans who live on the planet earth. A reduction in dependence on fossil fuels will go a long way to improve the climate and slow the degradation of our climate for all living beings.

LR 1730 aims to update Maine's interconnection rules. Current level 1 interconnection rules are designed for solar arrays that are 5-15 times larger than plug-in solar systems, with entirely different safety considerations. These outdated rules significantly inhibit the affordability and widespread adoption of plug-in solar kits and the role these systems could play in addressing energy accessibility and affordability. Similar bills have been introduced in the upcoming legislative sessions of New Hampshire and Vermont.

Climate goals & Climate justice:

As a practicing UU, I believe in social justice and the support of diverse multicultural and socio-economic communities where all feel welcome and can thrive. LD 1730 contributes to Maine's climate goals by expanding access to affordable clean energy ownership through the removal of unnecessary regulatory barriers. As described below, this bill supports environmental & climate justice by ensuring equitable access to solar ownership, particularly benefiting low-income and rural communities that face disproportionate energy burdens.

Plug-in solar systems are low-cost (\$600-\$5,000) and can be installed for less than half the cost per watt of traditional residential solar, making them far more accessible for renters, apartments, and homes with unsuitable roofs.

Low-income households in Maine are facing an electricity burden of 8%, which is double the 4% target, according to a report given to the Maine Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council in December of 2024. LD 1730 offers an immediate, effective solution to help alleviate this burden by enabling residents to generate their own clean energy, thereby significantly reducing their electricity expenses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Faith Barnes
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