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Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

Third Act Maine enthusiastically supports LD 1730 “An Act to Make Small, Portable, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis” Please vote Ought to Pass on this bill.

Third Act Maine is a statewide group of over 1,200 Maine elders committed to protecting our climate and democracy. Our members are represented in every county in Maine, with organizational hubs in Farmington, Waterville, Damariscotta and Portland. Third Act was founded in 2021 by the environmentalist Bill McKibbin of Vermont; it has grown into a national community of Americans over the age of sixty working to change the world for the better by transitioning to a renewable energy economy.

We Mainers are all painfully aware that electricity rates in our state Maine are among the highest in the nation, with prices forecast to continue to rise. This is a crisis for many households, but especially for elders on fixed incomes and for low income families. The average Maine household pays nearly \$140 per month to power their home. LD 1730 will allow homeowners and renters alike to reduce their monthly bill by utilizing plug-in solar which is much simpler to install and more affordable than rooftop solar.

The state of Utah was the first to legalize up to 1,200 watts of plug-in solar, and the legislation passed with strong bipartisan support. Similar bills are being considered in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York and Pennsylvania. Market research predicts if five states pass plug-in solar bills, within five years the price of a 1,200-watt system will drop as low as \$600. The cost today is under \$3,000 compared to a rooftop system which costs between \$25,000 to \$40,000.

The opportunity to take some control over power generation and to save significant money on electric bills will appeal to many Mainers, as will the DIY aspect of plug in solar. It's as simple as placing a few panels in a sunny location — like a patio or shed roof — and plugging it into an outdoor outlet. Add battery storage and Mainers can power critical appliances when the power goes out during a storm.

Molly Schen and Tom Mikulka
Co-leads Third Act Maine