

Jacob Roche
Berwick
LD 1730

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Berwick/Union of Concerned Scientists
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Supporting: LD 1730 An Act Regarding the Beneficial Electrification Policy of the State

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee.

My name is Jacob Roche, and I live in Berwick, Maine. I am the Northeast Campaign Manager for the Climate and Energy Program with the Union of Concerned Scientists. The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science into action, developing solutions and advocating for a healthy, safe, and just future. I am providing testimony in support of LD 1730, An Act Regarding the Beneficial Electrification Policy of the State.

The Union of Concerned Scientists advocates for policies that support the growth of distributed renewable energy, including rooftop solar and other small-scale plug-in solar applications, as a way to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, lower emissions, and provide consumer benefits like reduced electric bills and energy independence. Distributed generation also reduces strain on Maine's grid and improves reliability statewide.

During the first part of this legislative session, the Union of Concerned Scientists supported Maine's commitment to 100% clean energy by 2040. That bill (LD 1868), passed by the Maine Legislature on June 13, 2025, will reduce the state's reliance on imported fossil fuels by requiring all of Maine's power to come from renewable energy and other carbon-free electricity sources by 2040.

LD 1730 will help Maine achieve those energy goals by giving more people direct access to solar energy. Rooftop solar is incredibly important—but it alone isn't enough. Many U.S. households are excluded from rooftop solar due to cost, roof constraints, or rental status. The small systems addressed in LD 1730 are relatively low-cost and can be installed for less than traditional residential solar. They can be easily and safely installed by residents themselves, making them far more accessible for renters, people in multi-family buildings, and residents in homes with unsuitable roofs. Plug-in solar systems are designed to offset electricity use behind the meter and, under LD 1730, would not participate in Maine's Net Energy Billing program.

Continuing to replace methane gas and oil use in homes and businesses with a growing supply of zero carbon electricity is also a critical component of meeting Maine's climate goals. Passing this bill and making plug-in solar accessible for all Mainers will reduce the reliance on electricity generated by imported methane gas. The outcomes will be greater energy independence and resilience, and more stable utility bills for Mainers.

The Union of Concerned Scientists is asking this committee to stand up for the people of Maine and pass this beneficial bill. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1730. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jacob Roche
Northeast Campaign Manager
Climate and Energy Program
Union of Concerned Scientists