

January 6, 2026

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Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

RE: LD 1730—An Act Regarding the Beneficial Electrification Policy of the State

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Karen Blakelock, and I work as the energy policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to comment in support of LD 1730.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

In November 2025, the Office of the Public Advocate released a statement that, in the face of rising and volatile energy costs, “affordability must remain at the center of every decision we make about Maine’s energy future.”¹ Polling that TNC conducted last February demonstrated that the vast majority of Mainers view the cost of living and the cost of electricity to be very serious problems. LD 1730 offers a piece of the solution—it is an important step towards energy freedom as it allows consumers more control over their energy resources, is accessible to renters, and has the potential to offset increased costs associated with other methods of energy.

While TNC supports this bill, there is a small change we’d like to suggest. Section 4.3, concerning capacity limitations requires that the system incorporates zero-export controls that prevent export to the utility grid. This would require a certified installer to ensure the panel was not sending electricity onto the electric grid, and the costs associated with doing so would bring the cost per watt of energy produced on par with a rooftop solar installation, meaning that plug in solar would no longer be an affordable and equitable solution for renters.

It is worth highlighting that the proposed output limit of 1,200 watts is about the amount of energy used by an electric kettle or a toaster oven.² The impact of a system this size on the grid is minimal, and removing the export control requirement would help Mainers of all income levels access this technology that can help save money, improve resilience, and increase energy independence.

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/meopa/about/news/public-advocate-responds-2026-standard-offer-supply-rate-increases>

² <https://unboundsolar.com/solar-information/power-table>

I ask that you **vote Ought to Pass on LD 1730**. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.