



State of Maine
Office of the Public Advocate
112 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0112
(207) 624-3687 (voice) 711 (TTY)
www.maine.gov/meopa

Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

William S. Harwood
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

**Testimony Neither For Nor Against
LD 417, “An Act to Facilitate Net Energy Billing”**
March 2, 2023

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

My name is William Harwood and I am the Public Advocate, here today to testify neither for nor against LD 417, “An Act to Facilitate Net Energy Billing.”

One of the problems regarding the net energy billing program is that the utility billing system needed to support the program is complicated. Section 3 of LD 417 would add additional requirements that could result in very expensive billing system upgrades for utilities. Utility ratepayers should not be responsible for expensive billing system upgrades that only benefit a small subset of customers that are enrolled in net energy billing projects. The net energy billing program already shifts costs to those ratepayers that are not enrolled in the program and this bill would likely increase that cost shifting.

The OPA shares the concern motivating this bill but believes further analysis is required to; (1) analyze the cost of information exchange platform that would allow information sharing between the customer, the utility, and the project sponsor; (2) analyze the feasibility of the time requirements set forth in the bill; and (3) determine whether other funding mechanisms may exist such that utility ratepayers are not responsible for paying for costly upgrades that only benefit project sponsors and those customers enrolled in net energy billing.

Due to the complexities involved, this subject may be better addressed through a PUC rulemaking proceeding rather than through legislation.



State of Maine
Office of the Public Advocate
112 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0112
(207) 624-3687 (voice) 711 (TTY)
www.maine.gov/meopa

Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

William S. Harwood
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 417 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Harwood".

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate