



March 15, 2023

Senator Stacey Brenner, Chair
Representative Lori Gramlich, Chair
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in opposition to LD 826, “An Act To Prohibit the Disposal of Certain Solar Panels in the State and to Require Bonds to Cover Disposal Costs”

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Jeremy Payne and I am a principal with Cornerstone Government Affairs Group here to testify in opposition to LD 826 on behalf of our client the Maine Renewable Energy Association (“MREA”).

MREA is opposed to this legislation because it unfairly singles out one industry through the eventual end-of-life treatment of solar panels – are there other non-renewable energy materials that must bond for their disposal fees?

In recent years, the solar industry has been responsibly providing a cleaner energy future, creating jobs, delivering new taxable value to their host communities, and offering new pathways for recent high school and college graduates, or retrained Mainers. LD 826 would send a damaging signal to one sector of the clean energy marketplace we are encouraging to invest here over the next few decades.

As this committee knows, there is already a state-mandated decommissioning plan required of solar owners/operators and this bill would introduce an additional and costly layer to the existing requirements. Overall, at the end of their approximate 30-year lifespans, these panels will largely be recycled and reused to manufacture the next generation of solar panels. The raw materials do and will have considerable value; however, the solar recycling industry is relatively new because the number of panels needed to support that industry is still quite modest.

It may also be challenging to secure bonds to accurately predict future disposal/recycling costs at a time when there really is not much of a market for them in Maine given the newness of our burgeoning solar industry. Further, any additional requirements will likely wind up in our future electricity prices – increased costs associated with regulatory red tape will not just disappear, but will almost certainly rear their ugly head the next time we decide to contract for Maine-made renewable resources.

We ought to be looking for ways to reduce red tape, speed along our cost-effective clean energy transition, and improve our utility interconnection process so that Maine-made solar can help serve our homes and businesses for years to come.

We respectfully urge you to vote ought not to pass.

Thank you.