

Testimony of Elizabeth Woolfolk in Opposition of
LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and honorable members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. I am Beth Woolfolk, the Manager of Renewable Energy Planning and Policy for A Climate to Thrive (ACTT). A Climate to Thrive is a community-driven non-profit that is working on a clean energy transition that prioritizes community benefits across Mount Desert Island and the state. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to oppose **LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing**.

In 2020, the state set the ambitious goal to “achieve by 2030 an electricity grid where 80% of Maine’s usage comes from renewable generation.” Towns and cities across the state have also developed climate action plans and are beginning to implement them. For the first time in history, municipalities and schools across the country have the ability to receive federal tax credits that make solar economically feasible. As an organization, ACTT is working with all four municipalities across Mount Desert Island to implement projects that depend on both the federal tax credit and net energy billing tariff rate. Through our group, Local Leads the Way ACTT is also supporting and witnessing several other municipalities across the state who are leveraging this historic opportunity to implement renewable energy projects of their own. LD 1465 proposes to change the net energy billing tariff rate so that it only covers supply charges. Most municipal electricity bills are not reflected in supply charges but in distribution, demand, and other secondary charges. If the already curtailed tariff rate no longer covers anything other than supply charges, municipal solar projects shift from an investment that saves taxpayers money into yet another economic burden.

While volatile natural gas prices continue to give ratepayers whiplash, net energy billing accounts for only 1-2% of our electric bills. The current net energy billing tariff rate supports projects that add clean, dependable energy onto the grid, improve local grid infrastructure through private investment and build community energy literacy, priming communities for and supporting Maine through our clean energy transition. LD 1465 actively works against these projects and goals.

Finally, last year, this legislature passed **LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems**. We must allow this legislation to take effect before making further changes.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to vote against the passage of **LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing.**