



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From: Ania Wright, Legislative & Political Specialist, Sierra Club Maine
Date: January 9, 2024
Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 1465: **An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing**

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and esteemed members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

I am submitting the following testimony on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nationwide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. We urge the Committee to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1465.

The bill as written seeks to reform Maine's net energy billing program to limit electricity bill savings for solar owners without attention to legislation already passed this session (LD 1986).

LD 1465 preemptively prescribes changes to the program ahead of the implementation of LD 1986. Last session's bill reformed the net energy billing program to address structural issues and costs to ratepayers. LD 1986 also directed the PUC to account for the costs and benefits of net energy billing for ratepayers, information that has not yet become available to policymakers. Without allowing LD 1986 to first be implemented in full, LD 1465 prescribes action without full information on the effects further reform will have on ratepayers.

Furthermore, under LD 1465, net energy billing credits would be applied only to supply charges, eliminating the opportunity small scale solar owners have to offset their electric bills. Net energy billing allows for small scale solar adoption that benefits Maine ratepayers and makes solar accessible for lower income households and communities. Small scale solar is immensely beneficial to Maine people, from reducing T&D costs, to strengthening local grids, to lessening the use of fossil fuels.

It is worth reiterating that net energy billing constitutes a fraction of electric bills, (1-2% depending on territory), when compared to the 50-60% of the bill that goes to pay for natural gas dominant supply on the regional market (according to PUC report to EUT this month).



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In order to best serve Maine ratepayers and meet our climate goals, it is our recommendation to let LD 1986 take full effect before passing additional legislation, and to refocus on the true culprits of high energy bills, a broken utility system and overuse of expensive and environmentally harmful fossil fuels.

Sincerely,

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