



Mark W. Lawrence
Senator, District 35

THE MAINE SENATE
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3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Representative Zeigler and distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Mark Lawrence, I represent Senate District 35, which is five communities in southern York County. I am here today to present **LD 2099, An Act to Make Changes to Certain Laws Governing Renewable Energy Projects.**

This is a two-pronged bill, providing greater clarity to both state energy policy and DOL rulemaking. This would allow a cross section of stakeholders to participate in the rulemaking process, which would open the rulemaking process to better account for the emerging industry compensation threshold in the laws governing the State's offshore wind initiative.

In October, consistent with LD 1986, GEO applied for the U.S. EPA's Solar for All program, requesting \$99.5 million in federal funds to establish programs that address the barriers that low-income households face in accessing the benefits of solar and energy storage.

The energy policy change proposed in LD 2099 seeks to clarify that the Commission could use their existing authority to approve ratepayer-funded contracts for new community solar and storage projects that use federal Solar for All dollars to deliver below market energy to all Maine ratepayers if it is demonstrated savings would be delivered.

Consistent with the priorities of the Distributed Generation Stakeholder Group and the intent of LD 1986, to support cost-effective solar and storage systems under this new program, GEO proposed a portion of the Solar for All funds be developed through long-term contracts for new community solar and energy storage projects funded by federal dollars that provide benefits to low-income customers. These would not be net energy billing projects.

The change proposed in LD 2099 offers a limited fix specific to the implementation of some Solar for All dollars that allows the state to leverage federal dollars awarded into lower cost power for all Maine people while delivering the largest share of benefits to low-income households, increasing the equity of the state's clean energy policies.

I am happy to answer any questions at this time, and if the committee has specific questions pertaining to the energy component or rulemaking process, I would refer you to the Department of Labor and the Governor's Energy Office for those answers.