



Susan Bernard  
Senator, District 1

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**LD 32 "An Act to repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing."  
Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology  
Cross Building 211  
Thursday, February 27 9am**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Sue Bernard, and I represent thirty-seven communities in northern Aroostook County. I am here today to support LD 32, "*An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing.*"

Net energy billing charges have been plaguing the citizens in my district. Many constituents are calling and writing desperate to let me know their electric bills have gone out of control because of the costs which show up as "Public Policy Charges" on monthly bills. One of these calls stood out to me.

A constituent in Caribou called concerned about charges on his electric bill. He has a small workshop that he uses for hobbies and storage, and shared with me that during one billing period, he used 7 kilo-watt hours of electricity. The cost of the electric supply, distribution, and transmission for those 7 kilowatts came out to \$1.59. But his total bill came out to over \$50. This was in large part due to a \$25 public policy charge – otherwise known as the solar tax – was the most expensive line item on his bill. While \$53 may not seem life-changing, over the year it's over \$600, which is substantial for a person on a fixed income.

Today you will receive testimony from others: Farmers, small business owners and manufacturers who are facing hundreds or even thousands of dollars in increased electric costs. These increases are not sustainable, and businesses cannot absorb them without passing those costs to consumers. We are all impacted by these artificially inflated energy prices – costs that wouldn't exist without state mandated subsidies to developers. That is why I stand in support of LD 32. This is not a fight against solar energy itself— alternative energy sources clearly have a place in Maine's future. But it should stand on its own merit, not be propped up by subsidies that shift the financial burden onto the backs of our elderly, small businesses, and working families.

I urge you to support this bill and help bring much needed relief to the people of Maine. Thank you.