

**Testimony of Timothy Grant**  
**In support of L.D. 32, "An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing"**  
**Before the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee**  
**February 27, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology: I am Timothy Grant, and I am a retired Coast Guardsman from Glenburn. I am before you today in support of L.D. 32, "An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing."

As a retiree I live on a fixed income and my August bill from Versant Power was a rude shock with a 15% increase due to a "Public Policy Charge". This is on top of a large rate increase that we had already received earlier in the year. When I called Versant to find out what this was for, I was referred to the Maine Public Utilities Commission. When I called the Public Utilities Commission, I was told that this charge was to pay for people to install solar panels or join solar farms. I was also told that this fee was going to cost ratepayers in this state 4.4 billion over the next 20 years. This is outrageous and just plain wrong on many counts and is just another example of the constant stream of backdoor tax hikes that comes out of Augusta.

I can't begin to tell you how angry I am with this fee. I don't like paying this fee, but I do have a decent retirement income and can get by, however it is a far different story for my parents. I manage their finances, and I can tell you that this is a significant burden for them. A \$11.64 per month charge may not sound like a big deal to most of us but when you live on social security and this fee is combined with all the other raising costs for food, heating fuel etc it is a big deal. This is also a very big deal to the many Mainers struggling to raise families and living paycheck to paycheck.

The best way to combat climate change is to not use power in the first place. I am single and take steps to conserve energy and my typical bill is less than 350 kilowatt hours. Yet because this is a flat fee, I am punished for using less by having to pay a higher fee on a percentage basis than someone who uses 5 or 6 hundred kilowatt hours.

Finally, the single biggest thing wrong with this fee is that it is apparently unnecessary. I have talked with 2 different solar farm companies this week about their solar programs. Specifically, I talked with Matthew at Nexamp and Fabian at Altus Power. After discussing their programs and how they worked and knowing I was coming to give testimony on this bill I asked each one if this fee went away would I still receive the 15% discount. In both cases I was assured that yes, I would still get the 15% discount and that would not change. That being the case I must wonder just where this money is going and why I am paying this fee in the first place.

Let me be clear, I have no objection if my neighbor wants to put solar panels on their roof or in their yard. I do have a very great objection to paying for them. I should not be paying for my neighbors' solar panels any more than I should be paying the bill if they want to pave the driveway or put in a pool. Those projects along with solar panels are discretionary expenditures that should be the responsibility of the party concerned to pay for.

I urge you to support this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.