

February 6, 2025

Senator Mark Lawrence
Representative Melanie Sachs
Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Opposition to LD 32, "An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing," and LD 257, "An Act to Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing"

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology:

My name is Adam Lee, and I am a resident of Cumberland. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you all today, and I am speaking in opposition to both LD 32 and LD 257, which would essentially eliminate the practice of net metering in Maine.

I have had solar panels on my house for the last 15 years. Last year we installed roughly 220 kW of panels on our dealerships in Topsham and are preparing to install another 100kW. I along with thousands of other people and businesses in Maine have a vested interest in seeing net metering continue.

It seems that it was not too long ago that all we could talk about was energy independence. The United States is now the largest producer of oil and gas in the world. But the prices are still affected by things like a war in the Ukraine, or tariffs on Canada, events beyond our control. However, we do have control over the electricity that we produce from solar panels. Right now, over 13% of the electricity in Maine is from solar. That is electricity generated from an infinite source that will never run out.

Over 2.2 billion dollars has been invested in Maine in the solar industry with over 700 jobs being created. I don't think anyone wants to walk away from that. I understand that Net Energy Billing was created a long time ago to help a brand-new industry get started. Well, clearly this industry is booming, and we have all benefitted, so perhaps it is time to modernize the agreements. We cannot just get rid of net billing though. There is enough solar in Maine to power 250,000 homes. We cannot just pull out the rug from all these families and businesses. They all installed solar based on the rules that were and are in place: We installed solar on our businesses base on a 10-20 year payback assuming net billing.

Solar does benefit everyone. Power plants are expensive to build, and regardless of whether you are burning oil or natural gas, they do have an impact on the environment.

Maine is lucky to have the cleanest energy in New England with wind, hydroelectricity, and solar. We need to preserve net billing for all installations that already exist and consider modernizing these agreements going forward in a way that will not damage this ultimate form of clean energy.

Thank you.