



Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
% Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

February 26, 2025

**RE: LD 32: An Act to Repeal the Laws Regarding Net Energy Billing, LD 257: An Act to Eliminate the Practice of Net Energy Billing, LD 515: An Act to Reverse Recent Changes Made to the Law Governing Net Energy Billing and Distributed Generation, and LD 450: An Act to Lower Electricity Costs by Repealing the Laws Governing Net Energy Billing**

Dear Chair Lawrence, Chair Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation nonprofit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of LD 32, LD 257, LD 515, and LD 450 regarding Net Energy Billing.

Maine Audubon is a strong supporter of renewable energy development, including solar. Rapid deployment of new renewable energy resources is critical to reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and avoiding the worst impacts of climate change—the leading threat to Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat, the conservation of which is central to Maine Audubon's mission. At the same time, new renewable energy development, like any new development, if not thoughtfully sited, can displace wildlife habitat and negatively impact natural resources, including agricultural resources. Currently, there is a robust interest in solar development in Maine – and the Net Energy Billing (NEB) program is key to maintaining the clean energy momentum that our wildlife and human communities depend on.

Maine's NEB program allows residential, commercial, and municipal customers to receive credits on their electricity bills for excess power generated by renewable energy systems. Since its creation in 2019, the program has successfully helped jump-start the solar industry and endured thoughtful, effective, solutions-oriented reforms to enhance its efficacy over the past several years. Though all electricity sources have an impact on our energy bills, it is worth reiterating that NEB contributes to about 4% of our electricity bills, a mere fraction in comparison to the 50-60% of our bills that go to pay for volatile natural gas on the regional market. The NEB program has also demonstrated greater benefits than costs for ratepayers, providing almost \$30 million more in benefits than costs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maine Public Utilities Commission, EUT Committee Presentation. January 3, 2024:

<https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/sites/maine.gov/mpuc/files/inline-files/EUT%201.3%20%28Final%29.pdf>



Mainers currently face some of the highest electricity costs in the nation, but targeting NEB alone given its relatively small impact to ratepayers in comparison to other programs is a dangerous distraction to a systemic issue. We know that in order to reach our state's goals of electrification, we will need to expand our grid. In order to do this efficiently, effectively, and fairly, we need affordable clean energy. We look forward to continuing to work with this committee throughout the session to help develop true solutions to the high electricity costs facing Maine communities and to continue to make our climate and clean energy goals feasible. Dismantling the Net Energy Billing program in full, as these bills propose, would be detrimental to efforts to strengthen our grid, improve air quality, and reduce fossil fuel consumption – all while failing to address the numerous issues that Maine ratepayers face. **We urge you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 32, LD 257, LD 515, and LD 257.**

Sincerely,

Ania Wright  
Policy Advocate