

Testimony in Support of LD 830
An Act to Protect Maine's Scenic Beauty by Requiring Solar Panel
Fields to Be Hidden from View

Good Morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

My name is Deb Plowman and I'm from Hampden, Maine and I'm here to speak in favor of LD 830. I would like to thank Senator Haggan for bringing this bill before you.

It has been said that the last thing a farmer's field grows is a house. Today that field sprouts solar panels. As I travel the highways and backroads of this beautiful state, I'm shocked at how the beautiful scenery that Maine was famous for is broken up too regularly by a stark, fully visible solar field.

I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the first roadside field on the interstate. And then on major roads, and finally, backroads. And there are more every day. Before this goes too much further, I would ask you to consider this bill.

Decades ago, Maine decided that billboards were a blight on our landscape and banned. Today, signage on 95 is tightly controlled. Signage in towns as well. All with the intent of preserving our beautiful scenery.

Willing sellers and buyers have the ability to allow for these solar fields, just as we have seen for other types of development, i.e. business parks and subdivisions. Zoning and building codes ensure that the project is appropriate for the property: residential, commercial, etc. They serve to protect the property values of surrounding landowners. There is a growing frustration with those homeowners who can see solar farms from their property with little or no effort to create a visual barrier.

Maine is beautiful. For residents and visitors alike, I would ask that you support this bill. I'd hate to see a billboard company argue that it just doesn't matter anymore.

Thank you. I'll leave you with this poem which I learned in grade school and quote to my grandchildren.

I think that I shall never see a billboard lovely as a tree. Perhaps,
unless the billboards fall, I'll never see a tree at all.

Ogden Nash

Debra Plowman, Hampden, Maine