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Representative Melanie Sachs and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Skylar Werde and I'm the Head of Community Solar for Altus Power, a leading developer, and long-term owner and operator of commercial and community solar projects across the country, serving more than 500 customers, made up of businesses, municipalities and schools, as well as more than 35,000 Community Solar subscribers. We are one of the pioneers in the community solar industry and approach each of our projects with a long-term mindset and investment in the communities we serve. We are proud to bring the benefits of an investment in clean energy to communities throughout New England, including 61 MWs here in Maine. These projects in Maine have helped thousands of residents, businesses and municipalities lower their electricity costs while advancing the state's clean energy goals and helped create more than 15,000 jobs in Maine. I am here today to strongly oppose LD 1317, which threaten the viability of community solar and the associated economic benefits in Maine.

LD 1317 proposes sweeping changes to Maine's successful net energy billing programs – changes that would effectively dismantle community solar as we know it. By capping the tariff rate at 12 cents per kilowatt-hour by 2028 and linking rates to the standard-offer supply rate, LD 1317 will make it impossible to finance new community solar projects. Solar development requires long-term price certainty, and these artificial rate caps introduce unnecessary financial risk, discouraging investment in the state.

As a company deeply invested in Maine, we understand how vital stable, predictable and long-term capital is for large-scale infrastructure projects like community solar. These projects require millions of dollars in upfront investment from well-capitalized companies like Altus. Proposals like LD1317 jeopardize the confidence that financial institution partners and investors need to support these long-term developments. Without supportive policy frameworks, Maine risks losing not only renewable energy projects but also the significant economic benefits they bring, including job creation, property tax revenue and local contracting opportunities to the state of Maine.

Maine's community solar program has been a success story – driving private investment, creating local jobs and lowering energy costs, and being a model for other states to follow. Altus Power is committed to investing in local communities and building partnerships with Maine residents and leaders. This bill would reverse that progress, pushing Maine backward just as other states are doubling down on renewable energy. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Maine Legislature on policies that sustain and enhance this important program, ensuring continued economic and environmental benefits for Maine residents.

Thank you for your time.

Skylar Werde. Head of Community Solar