



May 1st, 2025

Public Testimony – LD 1777

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished Committee members:

My name is Sean Benjamin. I'm a resident of Portland, and I relocated to Maine in 2021 to establish and manage the Saco branch of Greentech Renewables. Greentech Renewables is part of the same family of companies as Gilman Electric Supply, which operates in ten locations throughout the state. While Gilman serves the broad electrical market, our branch focuses specifically on the solar and energy storage side of electrical distribution.

Since opening our doors 3 ½ years ago, we've made a strong commitment to servicing the Maine market. To date, we've supplied more than 100,000 solar panels to contractors across the state, many of which were delivered direct to project sites. In roughly six weeks, we will complete the construction of our new facility in Brunswick, located less than a mile from Cook's Corner. This move represents a major investment in Maine's clean energy future. Some of our personnel, including myself, came from out of state. These new Mainers are committed to staying long-term, working in the renewables industry, as long as our business remains viable.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed changes in LD 1777. By retroactively altering the compensation structure under net energy billing, this bill introduces uncertainty for many small Maine business owners, and developers, who made investment decisions under the existing rules. Many of the projects we've supported could see their financial models upended, without warning, or recourse.

We're eerily drifting towards what occurred in California. In 2022, net metering rates were slashed. Utility interconnection data shows solar demand plummeting between 70-80% in the single year following the policy shift. Numerous contractors, many Greentech Renewables partners, went under. To even attempt financially justifying solar, energy storage became a requirement.

Should Maine follow down the road of California, we should pick a better time than right now. United States import tariff rates, from the federal government, have been increasing. 70% of American lithium-ion cell imports, flow in from China. Due to new tariffs, pricing for many energy storage products, quite literally just doubled. Batteries, which are required in a post-NEB climate. The upside-down storage market, coupled with these proposed adjustments to our local net energy billing policies, make for a catastrophic combination.

Maine should expand net energy billing in a targeted way, not undermine it. NEB has created jobs, supported and encouraged investments, and accelerated Maine's transition to clean energy. Rolling these policies back, especially in a retroactive manner, and especially during this volatile federal climate, sends a chilling message to those investing in Maine's energy future. I urge you to reject LD 1777, and instead strengthen policies that provide predictability, transparency, and long-term support for renewable energy development in the state of Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sean Benjamin

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