



Maine Conservation Voters

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1936
**Testimony in Opposition to LD 1936, An Act to Provide Greater Equity in and Reduce Costs
Related to the State's Net Energy Billing Program**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Lucy Hochschartner, and I am the Climate and Clean Energy Director with Maine Conservation Voters (MCV). MCV represents over 14,000 members and supporters who are building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD1321, An Act to Provide Greater Equity in and Reduce Costs Related to the State's Net Energy Billing Program.

We are in a climate crisis. In 2024, global emissions hit yet another new peak.¹ Transitioning away from fossil fuels is an absolute necessity to ensure families in Maine have a livable future. There is no time to waste, and with unprecedented attacks on clean, affordable electricity across the country, Maine must ensure that we keep pushing forward, rather than getting dragged backward. Communities on our coasts and in the mountains, up north and in the south, all need a transition to clean energy to prevent further damage from new realities like climate disasters, shifted growing seasons, and the loss of winter tourism.

I also understand we are in an affordability crisis. I take that very seriously and have frequently come up to testify in support of programs for low-income customers and programs. I know that per S&P Global Commodity Insights data, household electricity prices in Maine rose 65.5% between 2018 and 2023. That was almost three times the rate of inflation and more than any other state in the country.² I know that the recent ERAC report on energy burden estimates that low-income households in Maine have an average electricity burden of 8% — more than twice what is considered affordable, though that may not fully capture assistance that these

¹

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-global-co2-emissions-will-reach-new-high-in-2024-despite-slower-growth/>.

²

<https://www.spglobal.com/market-intelligence/en/news-insights/articles/2024/8/rising-us-power-prices-reflect-new-reality-for-utilities-in-warming-world-82591284>