

Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
Before the Joint Standing Committees on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
In Opposition to L.D. 1966, An Act to Improve Access to
Community Solar Programs in the State
October 30, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki, and I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of more than 5,000 businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1966, An Act to Improve Access to Community Solar Programs in the State.

Many of the concepts in this bill have been discussed before, including similar proposals from the First Session that remain under consideration of the legislature. Consistent with our past positions, the Chamber is concerned that L.D. 1966 adds new regulatory and administrative requirements on Maine's utilities, making it more complex and costly to operate in our state.

Beginning with Section 1 (Administrative Charges) — expanding the definition to include “interconnections, line extensions, or work other than monthly electric services” seems overly broad. While we understand the intent may be to provide additional clarity or support dispute resolution, there is already an established process before the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to address such matters fairly and transparently.

The Chamber is also concerned with Section 6 (Public Policy Charge), which would require utilities to provide an “accurate and comprehensive description of all costs and benefits of public policy charges.” This language creates a significant administrative burden, particularly for utilities whose billing systems are not designed to itemize costs at that level of detail. As the Chamber noted during the public hearing on L.D. 1949 (Energy Fairness), changes to billing systems are neither simple nor inexpensive — they often require major system reconfiguration, staff training, and customer service updates.

If the Committee believes that this level of transparency is necessary, the Chamber suggests that an independent entity such as the PUC could develop and publish an annual report describing these costs and benefits, which utilities could then reference. This would achieve the goal without imposing new, duplicative costs that ultimately fall on ratepayers.

Additionally, requiring utilities to modify billing systems for consolidated billing will result in significant costs. Each new legislative mandate adds to these expenses and underscores the need for a broader discussion about how state-directed initiatives are to be funded.

Finally, with regard to Section 9 (Data Access), our understanding from utilities is that much of the data referenced is already being provided to community solar developers under existing processes. Before imposing new reporting requirements, we would encourage the Committee to review what information is already available and where any gaps exist.

Maine's business community — including utilities, energy developers, and end users — supports clean energy goals and the important role of renewable energy. However, as new requirements are layered on, it's essential to balance the benefits with the costs, administrative impacts, and long-term competitiveness of doing business in Maine.

For these reasons, the Chamber respectfully urges the Committee to oppose L.D. 1966 and instead look at solutions that enhance energy access without adding new regulatory burdens or expenses for Maine ratepayers, which includes the business community.