



# Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Legislative Director, Maine Conservation Voters  
In Support of LD 1966

*“An Act to Improve Access to Community Solar Programs in the State”*

Before the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

October 30, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury and I’m the new Legislative Director at Maine Conservation Voters. MCV is a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy.

I am here to testify in support of LD 1966, *“An Act to Improve Access to Community Solar Programs in the State,”* which would provide transparency for customers regarding any administrative charges that certain public utilities charge ratepayers, make community solar programs more accessible to moderate and low-income customers by requiring consolidated billing, and require utilities to accurately describe public policy charges on utility bills.

With the rising cost of energy, driven primarily by volatile natural gas prices and recovery costs from increasingly violent storms due to climate change, we need to do all that we can to make accessing other forms of clean energy, like community solar, easily accessible to all, particularly to moderate and low-income customers. A big barrier for customers to access community solar and the savings it provides is the billing process. Currently customers receive two bills. The first bill is a utility bill and the second is the bill from the community solar program. Customers have to pay both bills. It means you make a payment and then have to wait for the savings to show up as credits on your utility bill. Many people cannot afford to wait for those credits to appear. Additionally, having two bills is confusing. Even just one utility bill can be confusing to the average

rate payer, much less having two and trying to figure out how much money you are saving between the two bills. If a community solar company requests a single billing process, then the utility companies will send out one bill with the savings included, doing away with the two bill process and making it easier for moderate and low-income Mainers to take advantage of the programs and the savings they provide. The community solar company is then paid by the utility company. The community solar programs have agreed to cover the cost of implementing the billing system. New York, where Avangrid also provides services, has a similar law that has been successful.

This bill also helps provide transparency for customers. Customers, whether they be individuals or businesses, have a right to know what is included in the bill that they are paying. Right now, excluding regular utility service bills, there is no requirement to lay out exactly what is included in a utility bill. It makes it difficult to understand what is a reasonable charge and also makes it difficult to dispute charges that may be too high since it's unclear what, exactly, that charge covers. This bill will define "administrative charge" and make it clear what is included in those charges and also require that ratepayers be refunded if the Maine public utilities commission finds that customers have been overcharged. These are reasonable steps to help protect customers from unnecessary fees on their bills.

Finally, this bill makes sure that utility companies are accurately disclosing information to customers about the public policy fees that are in their utility bills. Currently, utilities aren't required to disclose all policies that contribute to the public policy fees in their bills. This allows them to call out specific policies that might be negatively impacting their bottom line and implying to customers that increased costs are due to that policy, for example solar, instead of giving them a clear picture of everything that can contribute to these fees. Once again, customers have the right to know what is impacting their utility bill, not just what the utility companies want to tell them.

This bill is a common-sense piece of legislation that will provide transparency to utility customers and make it easier for moderate and low-income Mainers to access community solar programs, which can save them money. Please vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1966.

Thank you.