

Testimony of Elizabeth Woolfolk in Support of
**LD 1730: An Act to Make Small, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All
Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Elizabeth Woolfolk, and I am the Manager of Renewable Energy Planning and Policy at A Climate to Thrive (ACTT). Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to support LD 1730: **An Act to Make Small, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis.**

A Climate to Thrive is a community-driven non-profit working on an equitable clean energy transition that prioritizes community benefits across Maine. On the ground, this looks like programs such as SolarizeMDI, where we partner with installers to coordinate bulk purchases that significantly reduce costs and make rooftop solar more affordable. Despite these savings, I have worked with countless community members who want to own solar, but either do not own a home or cannot afford their own rooftop array, even with a discounted price. The loss of the federal tax credit means rooftop systems are even more out of reach. This coincides with a significant increase in electricity costs, leaving people who can least afford it unable to mitigate these rising prices.

Plug-in solar eliminates many of the soft costs that keep traditional rooftop solar unattainable for many throughout our state. These systems require no roofwork or multi-person installation crew, and most importantly, if this bill passes, no interconnection process requiring an engineer.

We worked with industry experts and electricians to tailor this bill to ensure these systems are accessible and safe. I'd like to highlight:

- Registration ensures utilities have visibility into where these systems are installed, enabling future load planning.
- Zero-export devices eliminate backfeed concerns to ensure line workers' safety, and that no infrastructure upgrades will be triggered as a result of installing these systems.
- These systems will operate entirely outside of Maine's Net Energy Billing program.

ACTT is eager to roll out another Solarize program focused on these devices and we have a broad network of community groups across the state that could do the same. Based on our discussion with industry experts, one of the most expensive components at this time is the individual shipment of these systems. By creating a market here in Maine, we can further reduce the cost of these devices.

Plug-in solar creates a new pathway to clean-energy ownership for people who have historically been shut out. This is a practical, safe, and urgently needed step to expand clean-energy access.

We urge you to support LD 1730 and allow plug-in solar to move forward so that more Maine households can participate in our clean-energy future.