



STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
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Testimony in Opposition to LD 2174

Good afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

My name is Representative Katrina Smith, and I am speaking today in very strong opposition to LD 2174.

I live in and represent rural Maine, where communities like Palermo, China Windsor have taken careful, democratic action to adopt local ordinances governing solar development and transmission infrastructure.

In Palermo, residents passed an Electric Transmission Facilities Ordinance designed to protect the town's rural character while addressing real concerns like environmental impacts, property values, and public health and safety. It requires local Planning Board approval, detailed environmental review, stray voltage testing, and clear decommissioning standards. These are thoughtful, locally tailored protections—not barriers to development.

Similarly, Windsor adopted a Utility Scale Solar Ordinance that ensures projects are reviewed locally and responsibly. It requires setbacks, visual impact assessments, buffering and screening to protect neighboring properties, limits on glare and height, and strong decommissioning requirements backed by financial assurance. It also ensures that abutters are notified and that projects are designed to fit the town's landscape and character.

And in China, their Solar Energy Systems Ordinance requires strict standard for Screening, Security, Maintenance and Regulatory Compliance as well as decommissioning plans and procedures. Their plan lays out how they will protect both their residents and the environment.

All of these ordinances reflect the will of local voters and are grounded in Maine's long tradition of home rule.

LD 2174 would override these local decisions by making stricter local standards "void and of no force or effect." That means communities like mine would lose the ability to protect their own landscapes, property values, and quality of life.

Rural Maine is not one-size-fits-all. Local residents understand their land, their economy, and their needs better than anyone in Augusta. This bill removes their voice at the very moment it matters most.

I urge you to reject LD 2174 and preserve the right of towns like Palermo, China and Windsor to remain in control of what happens within their towns.

Thank you.