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May 7, 2021

Senator Stacy Brenner, Chair
Representative Ralph Tucker, Chair
Cross Building, Room 216
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Opposition to LD 1595, An Act To Address Waste Associated with Solar Energy Equipment.

Dear Chair Brenner, Chair Tucker, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1595.

While it is laudable to establish a statewide program in Maine to recycle solar panels, the burden for the proposed program in LD 1595 would be placed on the taxpayers and government of Maine. In addition, the bill would place the responsibility on property owners with solar panels to be insured to pay the full costs of recycling damaged solar panels.

We suggest that the recycling of out of date and damaged solar panels should be the responsibility of those who manufacture solar panels. Such extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws have been in place in Maine for electronics, mercury thermostats, paint, fluorescent lamps, and other products. Our organization, the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI), has worked with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to put many of these laws in place in Maine. Solar panels should be managed through the same type of EPR system.

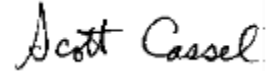
While LD 1595 is focused on an important problem, it does not reflect the best practices for solar panel recycling legislation in the United States and Europe. In 2017, Washington passed a law to recycle solar panels through EPR. In Europe, where solar panels EPR has been established since 2012, the recycling rate for solar panels is at 95 percent. Manufacturers have financial and management responsibility for the program through their stewardship organization, PV Cycle, relieving government of this burden.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national nonprofit working to reduce the health and environmental impacts of consumer products from design and production through end-of-life. With members from 47 state environmental agencies and hundreds of local governments, as well as 120 partners from companies, organizations, universities, and international governments, we promote product stewardship initiatives across North America.

While LD 1595 focuses on an important waste stream by proposing to recycle solar panels in Maine, we urge you to consider legislation that would implement an EPR program instead.

If you have any questions or if I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at (617) 513-3954, or Scott@ProductStewardship.US.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Cassel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder