



Maine Municipal
Association

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Provisional Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 1595 – An Act To Address Waste Associated with Solar Energy Equipment

May 7, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Neal Goldberg, and I am providing provisional testimony neither for nor against LD 1595 on behalf of MMA. Amended testimony will be provided if the comments offered today do not align with the Legislative Policy Committee's official position.

In Maine, stewardship expectations and programs are already in existence for numerous categories of products to ensure they are disposed of properly. Certain solar panel waste can be hazardous when not disposed of properly and has potential to be reused if recycled. The volume of solar panel waste is also expected to increase as they become more affordable and new technology starts replacing outdated solar panels. For these reasons, stewardship laws for solar energy equipment would be useful.

The stewardship guidelines laid out in LD 1595 are well-meaning but are too discouraging of future implementation of solar energy generation projects. For private consumers, the additional fees and insurance premiums will prevent many from making the leap to renewable solar energy for their homes and businesses. Likewise for municipalities, these extra costs will make installing solar panels on municipal buildings or creating municipal power districts further out of reach.

There is also some concern for the state's current capacity to recycle solar waste. The bill requires solar energy equipment to be recycled by a solar energy equipment recycling facility approved by the Department of Environmental Protection. If this approval process does not already exist the DEP will have to create one and approve a sufficient number of facilities. Long-distance transportation of solar panel waste would present another cost to potential consumers.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.