



Maine Municipal Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support For

LD 826 - *An Act to Prohibit the Disposal of Certain Solar Panels in the State and to Require Bonds to Cover Disposal Costs*

March 15, 2023

Sen. Brenner, Rep. Gramlich and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham and I am submitting testimony in support for LD 826, *An Act to Prohibit the Disposal of Certain Solar Panels in the State and to Require Bonds to Cover Disposal Costs* on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association, which represents the interests of municipal government before the Legislature. The positions of the Association are established by our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), who are elected by the councils and selectboards of municipalities in each of Maine's 35 Senate districts.

Many communities were caught flat footed as incentives to develop large scale solar projects rolled into municipalities with near grid sites and requests for projects that were intentionally just below the state review thresholds, often by half acre amounts. While communities attempted to bring in bonding as part of a decommissioning plan for development, others added these provisions to be triggered once the project changed ownership until state level requirements for decommissioning were activated. Recycling of solar panels was not envisioned with the plan simply the removal of the material including their underground infrastructure to restore the site to predevelopment states.

Officials are concerned that they will be left holding the remediation costs for the explosion of this types of development in their communities and the rapid change of ownership that has followed. As these projects also receive significant tax incentives from their operations, and only 50% of the loss locally payable business and equipment taxes are received in the community from the state, they should be required to manage the waste generated by their development in a responsible way in line with Maine's solid waste hierarchy.

The industry is best suited to manage how their material is recycled and best able to develop the appropriate market for their materials. Officials believe they should not be placed in Maine's landfills and should be held responsible for those costs in advance for the community that may be left to manage the waste later.