

Nexamp Testimony – LD 634, 583 and 249
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology Hearing
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March 16, 2021

Thank you, Chair Lawrence, Chair Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Kelsey Fiori and I am the New England policy lead at Nexamp, a vertically integrated clean energy company with over a decade of experience in this region developing, constructing, operating and maintaining solar and energy storage projects.

I am testifying today in opposition to:

- LD 634, “An Act To Cap the Value of Contracts for Renewable Resources and Distributed Generation Resources;”
- LD 583, “An Act To Repeal the Changes Made by Public Law 2019, Chapter 478, ‘An Act To Promote Solar Energy Projects and Distributed Generation Resources in Maine;’” and
- LD 249, “An Act To Eliminate the Current Net Energy Billing Policy in Maine.”

Each of these bills would either do irreparable harm to the Net Energy Billing program and distributed generation in Maine or eliminate the program outright.

Nexamp currently has over 300 MW of projects in development in Maine. Understandably, we have a vested interest in both seeing projects under-development held harmless from future program changes and a pathway for future development. We have invested millions into the NEB program to date, and it is critical for the future of Maine clean energy that those investments are protected and those projects under development are able to move forward.

Nexamp’s portfolio represents more than just clean electricity for the local Maine grid. It represents tens of thousands of customers, including residents, small businesses, municipalities and others who will enjoy meaningful savings associated with their participation in the program. Nine thousand Mainers are already subscribed to our community solar program and are ready to begin seeing savings once our current pipeline projects “go live.” Our projects represent millions in local tax revenue for the communities that will host our projects. Finally, all projects are made possible by landowners who choose to lease their land for development of a solar farm in exchange for an additional and meaningful source of revenue.

In fact, not only are subscribers, landowners and others directly participating in the program benefitting from NEB, but all Mainers. Daymark Energy Advisors recently completed an independent analysis of the costs and benefits of the NEB program, following the release of the

Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) incomplete analysis last November, which failed to account for the economic, environmental and societal, among other, benefits of the program.

As opposed to the \$160.8 million in net costs cited by the PUC, results of the analysis show that the NEB program provides a net benefit of \$1.8 million. The report shows that the NEB program expansion that this Committee made possible has already spurred \$60 million in economic activity, helped create hundreds of jobs for Mainers, and begun offsetting 34,000 tons of carbon annually. And these benefits only represent a fraction of what's to come. Looking forward, projects in the NEB pipeline, according to the report, have the potential to drive \$800 million in economic activity in Maine, create thousands more jobs for Mainers, and offset over 600,000 tons of carbon annually. As Maine emerges from a year-long pandemic, these numbers are more meaningful than ever, their impact crucial to the coming economy recovery. An NEB program that is preserved and protected will continue to benefit all Mainers, all while helping the state meet its ambitious clean energy and climate goals.

The Daymark report findings echo a December 2020 report, "Why Local Solar for All Costs Less: A New Roadmap for the Lowest Cost Grid," which looks at the entirety of the benefits of an optimized grid. The report finds that, "developing 247 GW of local rooftop and community solar would be the most cost-effective way for the United States to transition to a clean energy system by 2050, and is the most cost-effective way of reaching 95% emissions reductions from 1990 levels." Further, the report finds that expanded deployment of solar and storage has the potential to create over two million jobs across the country while saving \$473 billion by 2050. The benefits of local, clean energy programs like NEB in Maine are real -- for ratepayers, for the economy, and for the environment.

Maine has laid the groundwork for the state to become a regional leader in harnessing the clean energy economy to drive job creation, help Mainers realize meaningful savings on their electric bills, and to support local communities and landowners. These benefits would, alone, be notable. But crucially, the NEB program is accomplishing this while helping the state make strides toward its ambitious clean energy and climate goals. The Mills Administration and this legislature sent a clear signal that Maine was open for clean energy investment when it passed LD 1711 in 2019. As a result of that signal, Maine is becoming a clean energy hub in New England. We ask that the Committee reject LD 634, LD 583 and LD 249 and allow what has already proven to be a successful and beneficial program to continue moving Maine forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your consideration of these comments.