



March 15, 2021

Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Seth Berry, Chair
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 249, LD 583 and LD 634

To Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and Members of the Energy Utilities and Technology Committee:

Please consider this written testimony in opposition to LD 249, LD 583 and LD 634.

The Coalition for Community Shared Solar (CCSA) is a national Coalition of businesses and non-profits working to expand customer choice and access to solar for all American households and businesses through community solar. Our mission is to empower every American energy consumer with the option to choose local, clean, and affordable community solar. We work with customers, utilities, local stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement policies and best practices that ensure community solar programs provide a win, win, win for all, starting with the customer

We urge you to not adopt the three bills currently before the Committee for considering, LD 249 "An Act To Eliminate the Current Net Energy Billing Policy in Maine," 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 634 "An Act to Cap the Value of Contracts for Renewable Resources and Distributed Generation Resources." All three bills either outright, or effectively, undo the work that this Legislature achieved in passing LD 1711 and undercuts millions of dollars on investment made into the Maine economy. The passage of any of these bills would kill the distributed and community solar industry in Maine, and eliminate millions of dollars of investment.

The Net Energy Billing program, originally passed in LD 1711, has already generated \$60 million in economic activity in Maine, with the potential to generate \$800 million more, as shown by the just released study completed by Daymark Energy Advisors, *Costs and Benefits of Maine's Net Energy Billing Program*. Furthermore, the analysis completed by Daymark shows that program, when accounting for the components of the value of solar, provides a net benefit to Maine ratepayers. Maine customer have already signed contracts to participate in projects

through the Net Energy Billing Program, and are expecting to not only engage in the growing clean energy economy in Maine, they are also expecting to see savings. In a letter to the Legislature on February 17, 2021, fifteen municipal and public officials notified legislative leaders of their concern regarding delays to projects due to interconnection challenges. If these projects were to be completely cancelled due to the passage of these bills, many more public officials, in addition to the signatories on that letter, would be disappointed in the Maine's Legislature's failure to commit to the promise they had already made.

Passing these bills will also gut Maine's progress towards meeting its ambitious climate goals. The recently published report *State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment* sponsored by the Governor's Energy Office states that Maine is on track to meeting its 2026 Goals, in part because of the distributed solar that will be built due to the passage of LD 1711. Eliminating this program now not only throws an industry into turmoil but hurts Maine's chances of staying on track for its broader climate goals.

The fact is, climate change is already impacting our country, and the state of Maine. The state took necessary and decisive action in the passage of LD 1711 and the creation of the Net Energy Billing Program. Investments in clean, distributed energy must be made now to not only improve the resiliency of our grid, but also to improve Maine's economy with clean energy that can be equitably distributed through community solar. These bills will set Maine back years and could permanently affect the state's reputation as a market for distributed community solar.

We strongly encourage you to reject these bills and embrace the action you have already wholeheartedly taken by the passage of LD 1711 in 2019.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide any additional information to your committee.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Kelly O'Neill
Northeast Regional Director
Coalition for Community Solar Access