

**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**

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Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, March 16, 2021

Honorable Committee Chairs Senator Lawrence & Representative Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the following bills: 1) *LD 240 – An Act to Eliminate the Current Net Energy Billing Policy in Maine*; 2) *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 3) *LD 634 – An Act to Cap the Value of Contracts for Renewable Resources and Distributed Generation Resources.*

Acadia Center is a non-profit, research and advocacy organization incorporated in Maine and committed to advancing the clean energy future by offering real-world solutions to the climate crisis. Acadia Center tackles complex problems, identifies clear recommendations for reforms, and advocates to create significant change that supports a low-carbon economy across the Northeast which can then be a model for application elsewhere. Acadia Center identifies regional, state, and local improvements that will dramatically reduce carbon pollution and improve quality of life throughout the Northeastern United States.

Acadia Center opposes LD 240, LD 583, & LD 634.

A November 2020 report by the Governor’s Energy Office, entitled “*Strengthening Maine’s Clean Energy Economy*,” held up the State’s renewable energy sector as a source of economic growth and workforce opportunities, a critical tool in Maine’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting economic disruption. The report has several findings, including the following:

- The renewable energy sector, including wind and solar, represents one of the fastest growing sectors in the country.
- Renewable energy policy changes over the last couple of years have spurred solar development and investments, new jobs, and other benefits.
- Our Northeastern neighbors, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York, have leveraged the renewable energy sector to their advantage and Maine has multiple opportunities to do the same, enhancing its competitive advantage with other states looking to attract additional clean energy investments.
- Maine has some of the boldest clean energy policies in the country, including a renewable portfolio standard requiring 80 percent of electricity from renewable resources by 2030 and a goal of 100 percent by 2050.

Since 1999, Maine's renewable energy policies have grown stronger. In 2019, Governor Janet Mills signed landmark legislation mandating that Maine reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% by 2050; developed an Executive Order committing the state to a carbon-neutral target by 2045; approved legislation setting ambitious renewable energy targets for the state through 2050; and supported other bills that created incentives for increased residential, commercial, institutional, and community solar energy projects. Other initiatives bolstered and improved Net Energy Billing (NEB) policies, further incentivizing solar energy projects in Maine.

Solar and other renewable energy benefits include reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants; improvement of public health; economic development opportunities; community and workforce enhancements; reduced consumer costs; and decreased spending on fossil fuels from out-of-state sources.

All this is a long way of saying that now is not the time to halt or otherwise roll back renewable energy progress and policies that work for Maine in so many ways and turn to legislation that will undo the progress and set the State back. Instead, we could look at a potential diverse, active stakeholder process to look at ways to "tune up" renewable policy to ensure it works as intended – to incent new investment, reinvestment and continued diversification of Maine's renewable energy portfolio. *LD 709 - Resolve, To Provide a Brief Moratorium on Certain New Net Energy Billing Arrangements and To Examine the Costs and Benefits of Net Energy Billing* may be one such option to do so, as it "directs the Governor's Energy Office to convene a stakeholder group to examine both the costs and benefits of net energy billing arrangements associated with a distributed generation resource with a nameplate capacity between 2 megawatts and 5 megawatts in order to make recommendations regarding the need for any changes to existing laws." Maine renewable policy has been a positive policy tool in helping to develop a strong renewable energy market and development in the State and should continue to support Maine's renewable energy industry by driving demand for Maine-based renewable resources. Some adjustments may be necessary to encourage new renewables investment and production in a sustainable manner that lowers or maintains lower electricity prices, reduces carbon dioxide and other emissions, and increase jobs and other economic benefits in Maine.

Attaining Maine's climate goals requires a continued shift in electricity generation away from fossil fuels like natural gas to low and no-carbon power generation. As the buildings and transportation sectors, which are currently the largest emissions sources, become increasingly powered by clean electricity, climate pollution in these two areas will fall. Maine should work to increase clean electricity by pressing for policies including renewable portfolio standards, solar incentive programs, and competitive procurements, as well as continuing to ensure that these policies are well-designed and achieve their goals. Acadia Center's supports advancing both clean, large-scale electricity generation and local, distributed clean energy; accelerating decarbonization of the grid and removing barriers to greater clean energy deployment; addressing equity and health disparities in clean energy policies; and working on a regional basis to ensure that ISO-NE fully recognizes the benefits of Maine's climate and clean energy requirements.

Acadia Center urges the Committee to oppose LD 240, LD 583, and LD 634 and looks forward to working on Maine's continuing renewable energy policy strategies. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

For more information:

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