



March 16, 2021

The Honorable Mark Lawrence
Chair, Energy, Utilities, & Technology
Committee
Senate Democratic Office
3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

The Honorable Seth Berry
Chair, Energy, Utilities, & Technology
Committee
House Majority Office
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Borrego Testimony on:

[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"

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jessica Robertson, and I'm Director of Policy for Borrego, a solar and storage developer. Both before and during the pandemic, the renewable energy industry has been one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. The passage of LD 1711 in 2019 sent a signal to the renewable energy industry that Maine wanted to participate in this growing industry, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create good-paying jobs, and produce more of its energy right here in Maine. Borrego responded to this signal, and since 2019 we have invested millions of dollars in Maine to develop community solar projects for the Net Energy Billing program. LD 249 and LD 583 would have a devastating impact on Borrego and our colleagues in the solar industry, by canceling the program that would allow us to operationalize those millions of dollars of investment.

However, the damage caused by these bills would extend beyond the immediate financial harm to developers like Borrego who would have to cancel projects already in development. These bills would send an even more powerful signal to the industry than that sent by LD 1711: passage of these bills would say that investing in Maine is not a safe bet. Pulling out the rug from under an entire industry would put a freeze on clean energy investment in Maine that will take years to thaw. The ripple effects of canceling the Net Energy Billing program would jeopardize Maine's ability to meet its climate goals, and would deprive the Maine economy of an important engine of growth and quality jobs.

I would like to address the misconception that I think underpins these bills: that Net Energy Billing is not cost effective. This misconception is based on a deeply flawed report from the Public Utilities Commission, which falsely equated a reduction in revenue to investor-owned utilities with a cost to ratepayers. The report also overstated the costs of the Net Energy Billing program in a number of other ways, and completely failed to calculate the benefits of the program, even failing to include the Commission's own prior analysis of the value of solar. A new analysis of the Net Energy Billing program released today by Daymark Energy Advisors

corrects some of the mistakes and omissions made by the Public Utilities Commission report and shows that the Net Energy Billing program in fact provides a net **benefit** to ratepayers. This is the case even though the Daymark report does not include all benefits of the program, such as the significant investments developers make in strengthening the grid.

In light of the Daymark report, canceling the Net Energy Billing program is not just a proposal that would have damaging consequences, it is also a proposal without justification.

In sum, we strongly oppose LD 249 and LD 583 because they would cause both immediate harm to Borrego and the rest of the solar industry, and long-term harm to Maine's economy and its ability to meet its climate goals. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Robertson
Director of Policy and Business Development, New England
Borrego Solar Systems, Inc.