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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**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
L.D. 583**

**GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE
March 16, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Melissa Winne and I am the Energy Policy Analyst for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

The GEO testifies in opposition to L.D. 583.

This legislation seeks to repeal much of Maine's net energy billing program within Public Law 2019, Chapter 478. That law, along with other steps taken by this Committee, have enabled robust growth of the renewable energy industry in Maine, particularly for distributed solar photovoltaic generation. Repealing net energy billing, as proposed by this legislation would unnecessarily jeopardize investments already made in Maine by residents, businesses and municipalities across the state as well as the growth of a key industry and our state's ability to achieve our clean energy targets.

In November 2020 the GEO published a report titled "Strengthening Maine's Clean Energy Economy,"¹ which found that solar jobs are the second-largest share of electric power generation jobs in the state and highlighted the thousands of jobs the solar industry supports in our neighboring states in the region. Nationally, solar jobs have grown five times faster than overall U.S. job growth between 2014 and 2019. The report further found that the clean energy sector is poised to play a significant role in our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These jobs come with the development of an industry that has drawn investment to projects in every county in the state.

The rapid and widespread deployment of renewable generation is critical to ending our dependence on imported fossil fuels and the emissions they create. The state's climate action plan Maine Won't Wait,² developed with input from numerous stakeholders and released last December, identifies distributed generation as a key element of ensuring a clean energy supply for Maine people.

¹ "Strengthening Maine's Clean Energy Economy." November 9, 2020.

https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inlinefiles/StrengtheningMainesCleanEnergyEconomy_Nov92020.pdf

² "Maine Won't Wait." December 1, 2020. https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

The GEO looks forward to working with the Committee on legislation that considers appropriate modifications to distributed generation where necessary. Thank you, and I welcome any questions.

Thank you for your consideration and I welcome any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melissa Winne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Winne
Energy Policy Analyst, Governor's Energy Office