



**Testimony of the Island Institute in Neither for Nor Against LD 1659, An Act to Create the
Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator
May 12th, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, my name is Nick Battista, and I am offering this testimony on behalf of the Island Institute neither for nor against LD 1659.

The Island Institute is a 38-year-old nonprofit organization based in Rockland, Maine. The Island Institute's community development work focuses on: the marine economy, climate and energy pilots, small business, education, and leadership. Broadband is foundational to all of this work, and all Mainers need to have the ability to use high-speed, reliable internet.

Several communities we work with are undertaking ambitious clean energy projects. These are small communities, and the projects, for reasons of scale, risk, non-standard combinations of technologies, or other reasons, often don't quite fit traditional clean energy financing.

Eastport and Islesboro were recently awarded a year's worth of technical assistance from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory as part of a national Department of Energy process to support clean energy transitions on islands and in remote communities. The Island Institute is NREL's local partner in facilitating this assistance and supporting the communities.

- **Eastport** – The City of Eastport and Ocean Renewable Power Corporation applied for help with analysis around integrating a microgrid and related systems into the regional grid, integrating solar and tidal into the microgrid, and planning for beneficial electrification opportunities. Eastport is at the end of the line, so to speak, and backup power options are limited.
- **Islesboro** – The town energy committee is seeking help assessing and prioritizing various energy project options with an eye towards significant increases in renewable energy. They are looking at solar, EV charging, microgrids, and additional energy efficiency options, and have expressed interest in alternative fuels for the ferry that serves the island.

Other communities are moving forward with projects to increase renewable energy to significantly power their grids. Both **Matinicus** and **Isle au Haut** are well into multi-year processes to add substantial amounts of solar power and storage to their very small grids.

All of these projects are either currently struggling with financing or will likely need assistance to pull all of the pieces together into a workable project. Additional state-level financing options that are funded may help move these projects forward. Thank you for your consideration.