



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: The Energy, Utilities, and Technologies Committee
From: Marina Melo de Miranda, Sierra Club Maine
Date: 04/04/2023
Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 1232: *An Act to Increase Adoption of Solar Power in Maine***

Senate Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technologies Committee, I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to pass LD 1232: An Act to Increase Adoption of Solar Power in Maine.

I have a Master of Science in Energy Systems Engineering and took some specialty courses in Solar Energy for Engineers, for this reason I feel like I am in a position to make a case for aggressive adoption of solar energy in Maine. This great investment in solar energy in Maine, especially when paired with battery systems, will make the grid more resilient, since new buildings are expected to be connected to the grid. For this reason I am in favor of not only adding new buildings with photovoltaic into consideration, but also taking into consideration battery systems. Earlier this year, I wrote an article on grid resilience, that gives details on how solar energy systems could be made more resilient¹.

By adopting solar energy, not only would we be moving away from fossil fuels and importing energy from other states and Canada, we would also be saving more money and creating more jobs with local solar energy. There are places in Maine, specifically Northern Maine where it is difficult to find jobs that pay well. For a short amount of time, I worked as a sales representative in signing people up for solar energy from a local solar farm that has just been built. I was laid off when the solar farm became full. It would be of great benefit for people who want solar panels on their own roof and business people who want solar panels on their own building.

With that being said, we need to take into consideration that much of Maine is heavily wooded and hilly, which can prevent solar panels from rooftops from capturing sunlight. If this bill were to be altered so that builders are able to build solar farms nearby if it is not possible to have rooftop solar, I believe the goal of making buildings solar friendly is feasible.

¹ <https://www.prescouter.com/2023/01/technologies-that-improve-electric-grid-resilience/>

Additionally, the 40% of roof space designated for solar should be outside of required setbacks for fire safety or fall protection, and should not have rooftop units, vent pipes, or other obstructions casting shade within the 40% of roof space designated as a solar zone².

We believe this bill not only would make the Maine grid more resilient, but would also generate more local jobs and help everyone save money. For this reason, we urge you to pass LD 1232: An Act to Adopt Solar Power in Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Marina Melo de Miranda
Sierra Club Maine