To: Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From: Ezra Sassaman, Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Date: May 24, 2023
Re: Testimony in favor of LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems

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Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and other members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I am writing as a representative for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 470 youth from across the state fighting for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. I am writing in favor of LD 1986.

Maine Youth for Climate Justice supports a just transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. We recognize combatting the climate crisis through a shift to renewables is of the utmost importance for us and future generations to inherit a liveable planet.

We support LD 1986 because we recognize net energy billing and continued growth of cost-effective solar are crucial aspects of securing this just transition. We support the establishment of a new distributed generation program for solar that is based on existing expert recommendations and also support the fact that this legislation will allow Maine to leverage federal funds to achieve its program goals.

LD 1986 takes net energy billing (NEB) out of stranded costs and requires the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to account for NEB costs and benefits, including a specific set of avoided transmission and distribution costs that must be accounted for. The PUC would be required to calculate and allocate NEB costs and benefits annually based on actual costs and/or avoided costs over the previous year. As a result, the proposed program will provide significant net benefits to all utility customers and will provide a long-term average reduction in rates to eliminate any cost shift among customers.

For the above reasons, our coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, urges you to vote ought-to-pass on LD 1986. Thank you.