

Testimony of Phil Lichtenstein in opposition of
LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and honorable members of the Energy, Utility, and Technology Committee. I am Phil Lichtenstein and I am the Co-chair of the Town of Mount Desert's Warrant Committee, as well as a member of the Town of Mount Desert's Sustainability Committee. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to oppose **LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing**.

Mount Desert is currently considering constructing a solar array to reduce municipal fossil fuel use. We are considering the installation of 155 kW of solar on properties around Mount Desert, and consider net energy billing to be a key incentive for installing solar. By reducing the value of a net energy billing credit, this bill weakens our future solar array's economic performance at the expense of our tax payers. Given that net energy billing is an important mechanism for incentivizing municipalities to adopt solar, these proposed changes will put solar adoption out of reach for all except the most wealthy. If our municipality cannot utilize net energy billing credits to offset distribution, transmission and secondary billing costs, solar energy will not provide enough benefit to cover the cost of construction.

LD 1465 works against Mount Desert's climate goals, and the climate goals presented by the Maine Climate Council, by making the adoption of solar energy unattractive. The PUC has demonstrated that net energy billing is not driving the rise in electric rates and NEB accounts for only a cent or two of every dollar ratepayers pay in their electric bills. This attack on net energy billing will impact our ability to pursue solar energy and increase financial burden for solar project owners in Mount Desert.

Last session, this legislature passed **LD 1986: An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Storage Systems**. This policy must take effect before any changes around net energy billing proceed. If these changes occur as presented in **LD 1465**, they will damage the goals pursued by **LD 1986** without any evidence that it was a problematic policy. For these reasons, I urge this committee to vote against the passage of **LD 1465: An Act to Amend the Calculation of Tariff Rates and Billing Credits Under Net Energy Billing**.