



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1969 "An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development"

Robert Cleaves, Co-Founder and Principal Investor, Dirigo Solar LLC

February 28th, 2022

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, Representative Cuddy, and distinguished members of the Labor & Housing Committee. My name is Robert Cleaves and I am co-founder of Dirigo Solar, based in Portland. We strongly oppose LD 1969.

Dirigo, and our partners at BNRG Renewables, have developed and financed solar projects worth over \$100 million in the State. Four projects (in Milo, Oxford, Fairfield, and Augusta) were built in 2020 and are now operational. Construction of these projects created over 150 jobs at the height of the pandemic. Another three projects (in Hancock, Palmyra, and Winslow) were constructed during 2021 and will be coming online within a few weeks. And with our 2020 PUC award, another \$50 million will be invested in projects in Eddington and Augusta in the coming years. We are also community solar developers, with several projects in the development pipeline.

If LD 1969 was in place at the time we made our investment decisions, none of this investment or job creation would have happened.

The requirements proposed in this legislation are unnecessary, overly burdensome, and would have the unintended consequence of frustrating Maine's ability to meet the carbon emission reduction goals set forth by the Administration.

Maine is poised to offer ratepayers the lowest power prices in New England, thanks to more affordable and efficient solar technology that did not exist even five years ago. Why would we want to jeopardize these expected cost savings by making solar *less* cost-effective to construct and therefore more costly to ratepayers? The result would only prolong our state's dependence on imported fossil fuels, which are subject to cost fluctuations due to geopolitical forces outside of our control.

This proposal has the potential to seriously damage Maine's ability to deploy cost-effective solar power, with significant negative implications for job creation, ratepayers, and our state's ambitious (and necessary) climate objectives. For these reasons, we strongly oppose LD 1969.