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Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

Barry J. Hobbins
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

April 6, 2021

Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate and I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 815 “An Act To Support School Decarbonization.”

The OPA would like to thank Senator Maxmin for submitting this proposed legislation. Senator Maxmin and Efficiency Maine Trust started working on this proposal in the 129th Legislature and the Office is pleased to see that it is back in front of the EUT Committee for your consideration.

The Office of the Public Advocate is supportive of the shift from a school energy savings program, currently administered by the Trust, to the ambitious goal of assisting K through 12 schools in Maine becoming carbon neutral via a collaborative effort of Efficiency Maine Trust and the Maine Department of Education.

Another benefit of this bill is that it will help achieve the climate goals set forth by Governor Mills. Reducing the carbon footprint of Maine schools by making them more energy efficient will lower the costs to heat and power these schools and will save Mainers money while addressing the climate crisis at the same time.

The Office of the Public Advocate would like some clarity on the repeal of the school solar energy program. Would this program be rolled into the new law or is the bill taking a broader approach that is not specific to solar projects?

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 815, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barry J. Hobbins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate