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Testimony Neither For Nor Against
LD 1777, “An Act to Clarify Tariff Rates for Nonresidential Customers Participating
in Net Energy Billing with a Distributed Generation Resource”
April 29, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

My name is Heather Sanborn, here today as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 1777, “An Act to Clarify Tariff Rates for Nonresidential Customers Participating in Net Energy Billing with a Distributed Generation Resource.”

As this is now at least the third public hearing the committee has had this session regarding various proposed reforms of the net energy billing program, we thought it might be helpful to briefly lay out a framework for evaluating such proposals, including this one.

1. Does the package of reforms **decouple the costs to ratepayers** of the NEB program from unpredictable **increases in supply costs** and seemingly inevitable **increases in distribution costs**?
2. Does the package of reforms bring the **costs to ratepayers** of the NEB program roughly **in line with some reasonable model of the benefits** to Mainers of the program?
3. Does the package of reforms provide **significant ratepayer savings** over the next 20 years?
4. Does the package of reforms **avoid a wave of bankruptcies** of solar projects that could harm Maine municipalities, businesses, and individuals who thought they were doing the right thing by investing in distributed generation under a program designed by the Maine legislature?

5. Does the package of reforms **include consumer protections** that alleviate customer concerns about community solar billing and marketing practices?
6. Does the package of reforms point to a **program design for future distributed generation** to be built in Maine **without adding to ratepayer costs**?
7. Does the package of reforms provide a **durable solution** that won't need to be revisited by the legislature year after year?

We hope these seven questions can provide a useful lens in considering assembling the pieces of a comprehensive net energy billing reform package this session. The Office of the Public Advocate stands ready to assist the committee in whatever way we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Sanborn
Public Advocate