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**Testimony Neither for nor Against
LD 1591, “An Act to Promote Economic Reuse of Contaminated Land Through
Clean Energy Development”
April 20, 2023**

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

My name is William Harwood and I am here today, as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 1591, “An Act to Promote Economic Reuse of Contaminated Land Through Clean Energy Development.”

As you are well aware, Maine has a growing crisis in trying to balance the need for subsidizing renewable energy to meet our climate goals and the need to keep rates affordable. Maine definitely needs more solar, but I worry that if the PUC focuses on subsidizing more solar on contaminated land rather than solar on any land, we may end up with less solar and/or higher rates. Before we ask ratepayers to subsidize the generation of electricity, we should be confident of three things: (1) the environmental and economic benefits of the renewable energy project are real and substantial; (2) a subsidy is necessary to achieve those benefits; and (3) the subsidy is the smallest amount necessary to achieve those benefits.

The OPA recommends that any additional subsidy for solar on contaminated land come from the taxpayers through the budget process instead of placing an added burden on Maine ratepayers.

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 1591 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate