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**Testimony Neither for nor Against
LD 1830, “An Act to Advance Maine's Clean Energy Goals”
May 9, 2023**

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

My name is William Harwood, here today as Public Advocate, to testify neither for nor against LD 1830, “An Act to Advance Maine's Clean Energy Goals.”

The OPA supports our ongoing efforts to reduce our dependence on natural gas and promote renewable energy. Specifically, where ratepayer subsidies are needed to promote renewable energy, the OPA supports the competitive bidding program administered by the PUC. As designed, this program should result in a subsidy that is no larger than necessary for the developer to build and operate the renewable project.

However, the OPA is opposed to provisions that increase the subsidy beyond the minimum amount needed by the developer. Specifically, the OPA opposes provisions that limit eligibility for participating in competitive bidding or adjust the PUC’s scoring that will add to the overall cost to ratepayers as well as the requirements that the project provide environmental benefits will increase the cost to ratepayers.

Our Office also has concerns regarding limiting the program to 5% of retail electricity sales. Is that the right amount of solar? Instead, the OPA suggests directing the PUC to limit the size of the program and the amount of energy procured under the program if the cost will impose an unreasonable burden on 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 1830 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