



Testimony of the Environmental Priorities Coalition
Supporting LD 1649, An Act to Modernize Maine's Solar Power Policy and
Encourage Economic Development
March 16, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Woodsome, Representative Dion and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is Beth Ahearn and I am testifying today in support of LD 1649 on behalf of Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC). The EPC is a group of 31 environmental and public health organizations who unify around a common agenda every year. The EPC represents over 100,000 members in Maine who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that depend upon a healthy environment.

This bill represents an historic opportunity for Maine to pass an ambitious solar proposal that will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and jumpstart our clean energy economy

I want to thank the stakeholders who worked long and hard over the last six months to find a path for moving solar power forward in a way that benefits all rate payers. The stakeholders include the utilities, solar installers, municipal officials and the Public Advocate as well as environmental groups. Coming to agreement as they did is a remarkable achievement; many doubted it could be done. In a time when political discourse is at a low, a group of diverse interests came together and crafted the piece of legislation before you. This gives me hope.

Why is this legislation needed? Maine lags behind the rest of New England and much of the nation in producing solar power and corresponding solar jobs. This bill can change Maine's course with a ramp up of solar, from approximately 18

megawatts today to more than 250 megawatts in five years. This bill will create new markets for small community solar, large community solar, large commercial solar, and grid scale solar. Currently in Maine, community solar is limited to 10 meters (customers). This bill does away with that restriction and allows renters and people with no roof top solar to buy into community solar projects. This bill also encourages more residential and small business or community roof top solar.

The projection for job creation with passage of LD 1649 is 800 new jobs, which is triple Maine's current solar workforce. Several Maine solar installers currently travel outside of Maine to get work; this bill would allow them to find work here at home.

How will all ratepayers benefit? Solar customers will continue to receive payment for the excess power they sell to the grid, but they will also share in the costs of paying for the grid. The utilities who purchase the solar power will aggregate it and resell the power into energy markets. This revenue will be shared by all ratepayers.

Our health and our environment will benefit if this bill passes. The more we can rely on solar power, the less we need to rely on imported, polluting fossil fuels.

We do ask that one change be made to the bill; adding language to require legislative approval of rules drafted pursuant to this legislation. This is one way to ensure that a fair contract price is set for residential solar customers.

Many Mainers have expressed support for this policy, and their names are attached to my testimony. We hope you will follow their lead and vote unanimously to pass this priority bill.

Dear Legislators,

Maine is the only state in New England without a comprehensive solar policy, and we lag behind in solar installations and jobs being created. This initiative would ramp-up solar installations, increasing the amount of energy produced by ten-fold over five years, creating 800 new jobs, and reducing electricity rates for all Mainers.

To combat climate change head on, Maine needs to move from a fossil fuel based energy economy to one that provides clean, efficient, and abundant energy. The time has never been more right to pass comprehensive solar power policy in Maine. I urge you to support solar policy that is good for Maine's economy, health, and climate.

This bipartisan bill is strongly supported by Maine solar installers, environmental groups, community leaders, and utilities. It has the strong backing of Maine's Public Advocate because it is designed to ensure a net reduction in electricity rates.

Signed,

Alan Harris	Hampden	David Inglehart	Bath	Heidi Daub	Blue Hill
Alex Karaczun	Whiting	Debora Cole	Brunswick	Heidi Thomson	Searsport
Alfred Lee	Dexter	Deborah Chase	Cape Neddick	Helen Anderson	Portland
Alfred Padula	Portland	Deirdre Barton	Brunswick	Hilary Holm	Whitefield
Amy Davidoff	Kennebunk	Denise Brown	Verona Island	Holly Toothaker	Gray
Andrews Tolman	Readfield	Dennis Tobin	Gouldsboro	Hugh Curran	Surry
Anne Graham	North Yarmouth	Derek DeJoy	Belfast	Ingrid Scott	Castine
Avis Jone	Kittery	Deryl Holt	Waldoboro	J. Van de Sande	East Machias
Barbara Lehn	Belfast	Diane Brown	Sullivan	J. Davidson	Deer Isle
Barbara Morrison	Presque Isle	Diane Gilman	Woolwich	James Cooper	Richmond
Belinda Bothwick	Fayette	Diane Langley	Wiscasset	James Merkel	Belfast
Belinda Pendleton	Belfast	Diane Viner	Surry	Jean Beckley	Milbridge
Ben Hickey	Waterville	Donald Allen	Portland	Jean Bourg	Unity
Bennett Konesni	Belfast	Dori Meservier	Harrison	Jean Matlack	Rockport
Beverly Wescott	Augusta	Eavan Flanagan	Camden	Jean Wilhelm	Birch Harbor
Bill Rixon	Freeport	Eileen Kalikow	Cape Elizabeth	Jeffery Wahlstrom	Bangor
Bob Weggel	Bailey Island	Elizabeth Lussier	Boothbay Harbor	Jermar Inman	Machias
Bronwen Tudor	Georgetown	E. Townsend	Belfast	Jessica Graham	Waterville
Carl Beckett	Mechanic Falls	Elizabeth Wheeler	Belfast	Jessica Theriault	Poland
Carla Mitchell	Waterville	Ellen Johnson	Robbinston	Joan Wright	Rockland
Casandra Greco	Poland	E. Moesswilde	Brunswick	Joanne Dunlap	Rangeley
Charles Seyffer	Brunswick	Eric Holm	Lubec	Joel Graber	Bar Harbor
Cheri Brown	Bar Harbor	Erin Lloyd	Hallowell	John Bednarik	Montville
Christopher Dunn	Portland	Frank Hample	Jefferson	John Bernardy	Auburn
Christopher Lover	Albion	Frank Ridley	Solon	John Burke	Harrington
Cindy Torrey	Bethel	Gail Witherill	Cumberland	John Dickinson	Franklin
Crissy Bradley	Bristol	Garrett Wilkin	Monroe	John Lawrence	Windham
Curtis Jirsa	South Bristol	Gary Zane	Unity	John Pincince	Lincolnville
Daniel Wagner	Lubec	George Pearlman	Saint George	Jonathan Pizey	Kennebunk
Danielle Vayenas	Portland	Gordon Beck	Northeast Harbor	Karen Cote	Orland
Dave Oakes	Hope	Greg Huang-Dale	Fryeburg	Karen Jones	Augusta
David Buck	Peru	Harrison Roper	Houlton	Katherine Daigle	Hampden
David Gholson	Eastport	Hector Moreno	Saco	Kehben Grier	Machias

K. Thompson	Morrill	Phil Bailey	Hancock
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L. Hildebrandt	Harrington	Rani Sheaffer	Hallowell
Leslie Poole	Rockland	Raymond Janes	Warren
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Linda Stilphen	Saco	Richard Lawrence	Waterville
Linda Wilson	Topsham	Rick Churchill	Newry
Linnette Erhart	Franklin	Riley Neugebauer	Lincolnville
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Liselle Batt	Wilton	Robert Froese	Barrington
Lorien Batt	Wilton	Robert Pollien	Bar Harbor
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M. Zimmerman	Bethel	Robert Sipe	Auburn
Marena Grondin	Gorham	Roberta Yost	Millinocket
Margaret Cochran	Stockholm	Robin Furth	Surry
Marge Freed	Portland	Ron Goodwin	Biddeford
Marie L. Zwicker	Sullivan	Sam Bergman	Hancock
Marjorie Dole	Apartment 207	Sandra Kauffman	Brunswick
Marjorie Walsh	Monroe	Sandra Strahan	Stockton Springs
Marla Stelk	Gorham	Sarah Alley	Bangor
Martha Dodge	Damariscotta	Sarah Wolpow	Brunswick
Martha Resotko	Steuben	Savannah Sprague	Unity
Maryanna Bock	Bath	Scott Powers	Raymond
M. Robitaille	Richmond	Sharon Peralta	Springvale
Matthew Smith	East Machias	Soni Biehl	Trescott Twp.
Maxine Collins	Wilton	Steve Markowitz	Boothbay
Melissa Mann	Portland	Steve Saunders	Wayne
Melissa Robitaille	Richmond	Susan Barnett	Auburn
Meryl Pinque	Bangor	Susan Cutting	Belfast
Michael Downs	Kittery Point	Susan Kepner	York
Michael Johnson	Gorham	Susan Pastore	Portland
M. McDonald	Belfast	Susan S. Clark	Southwest Harbor
Michael Nugent	No. Monmouth	Tami Ellis	Farmington
Molly Bogart	Brunswick	Ted Koffman	Bar Harbor
Morgan Rogers	Portland	Teresa Attean	Bangor
Myranda Cole	Rockport	Teresa Trott	Farmingdale
Nancy Anderson	Cumb. Foreside	Teri Gerson	Prospect Harbor
Nancy Gilbert	Durham	Thomas Carey	Farmington
Nancy Lundquist	Otisfield	Tracy Weber	Augusta
Nancy Roberts	Holden	Vanessa Erickson	Fairfield
Nancy Wilds	Orr's Island	Victoria Lucas	Morrill
Oona Molyneaux	East Machias	Virginia Slawson	Rockland
Patricia M	South Portland	Wayne Barker	Portland
Paula Brown	Boothbay	Wendy C. Kasten	Belfast
Paula Holm	Lubec	Wendy Rolfe	Detroit
P. Megquier	Gray	Wendy Strong	Bar Harbor
Peter Dennett	Bath	Will Willette	Lisbon Falls
Peter Randall	Eliot	William Vaughan	Newcastle