

**Statement of State Senator Tom Saviello (R-Wilton) on
Proposed Changes to Net Metering**

October 17, 2016

I am concerned about the future of solar in Maine. While I appreciate that the PUC is undergoing a process to review our solar policies like net metering, I am concerned their recommendations go beyond their directive to explore options and instead, pave a path towards regression on solar in our state.

Mainers want more solar. That became clear when over 300 rural Maine people from Franklin, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Aroostook Counties joined thousands of others from Maine urging the Public Utilities Commission to save net metering. Mainers deserve and want a healthy future solar industry and the jobs and consumer benefits that will accompany it. This demands us, as the Legislature, to complete a more robust policy discussion to allow for stable solar growth. We started that policy discussion during the last legislative session, and we need to finish it.

Protecting and expanding community solar access for Mainers is the right thing to do. Protecting Mainers right to generate and use their own electricity from their own roofs is fundamental. Protecting the ability of Mainers with solar to contribute to our grid is key. Net metering is a backbone policy that provides stability to achieve these worthy goals.

As you know, my background is in the forest products industry. I've always been a firm believer that Maine's economy—and in particular Maine's rural economy-- has tremendous opportunities to capitalize on our local natural resources. Growing solar opportunities in Maine at every scale is a great way for us to advance local job growth, beyond what we have lost as other industries evolve. I am committed, as are many others, to sponsoring and supporting legislation in the upcoming session that modernizes Maine's solar economy and gives it a predictable future based on the best information and data available.

In light of that, I would urge the PUC to push the pause button, allow us to continue our collaborative process to identify the best long-term solution for this industry and ratepayers alike. Maine's solar economy is too important to bet the farm on proposals that lack the amount of research and data necessary to do something better.

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