What is Net Metering?

According to the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), net metering "is the single most important driver behind anyone’s decision – yours, mine, a local business’s, or town’s – as to whether it makes financial sense to install solar panels. And it’s pretty simple: with net metering, installing solar makes financial sense; without it . . . not so much."

Simply put, net metering is an accounting method that compensates small electricity generators for the excess electricity they supply to the electric grid. Small electricity generators do not earn a profit for this electricity, but rather earn credits that allow them to purchase electricity when their system is not producing an excess. Net metering does not increase the cost of electricity to other users on the grid. In fact, it benefits ratepayers.

Some of the many benefits of small solar electric generators are ...

- Reduced environmental impact from generating electricity from fossil fuels
- A grid with multiple, distributed sources of power is less vulnerable to failure from natural and man-made activity
- Significantly less loss in transmission and delivery when power travels short distances
- Solar electricity is added to the grid during the day when demand is high
- Local power from Maine is not dependent upon imported fuel, nor is subject to foreign generation or political activity

A well designed solar array will provide clean power for the next 50 years with very little maintenance and no fuel costs. Solar PV arrays can be installed at little or no upfront costs under programs and financing options that are currently available. If you own a home or business with good solar exposure you can install a photovoltaic array. If you don’t have a good site for solar, you can join a community solar farm located near you.

Why is A Climate To Thrive concerned about the proposed Maine Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) rule amendments to net metering?

According to the PUC's own 2015 Solar Valuation Study, solar’s actual net value to all ratepayers is $0.33 cents per kilowatt hour - well above the current net-metering credit of $0.13 cents per KWH. Proposed rule
amendments will offers less incentive for solar power and appear to ignore the conclusions of their own study.

The CLF credits wise net metering incentives with helping Massachusetts grow the amount of energy generated by the sun by more than 500% in the last five years. On the contrary, Nevada made changes that tripled the monthly fee solar-using families and businesses have to pay to “access the grid” and slashed the amount those same families and businesses are paid for supplying their clean, homegrown energy to the grid by 75%! In essence, the state eliminated all of the economic incentives for installing solar panels and as a result, the solar industry in Nevada crashed almost instantly, taking hundreds of good jobs with it and stifling the potential for one of the country’s sunniest states to harness even more solar power in the future.

Net metering is good for our state. It is a policy that should be promoted by and available to all Mainers.

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