

What makes Community Solar possible in Maine and who oversees the program?

The term “Community Solar” refers to a shared solar electricity generating system. Historically in Maine, such projects were financed and developed by the participating entities, which were capped at nine. Maine’s [Net Energy Billing \(NEB\)](#) program facilitated these projects by establishing guidelines for Maine’s utilities and the project developers. Utilities are required to accept electricity from Community Solar projects through grid interconnection and assign solar credits to participants, which are used to offset their electricity spend.

In 2019 the 129th Maine Legislature passed LD1711 [An Act To Promote Solar Energy Projects and Distributed Generation Resources in Maine](#). This bipartisan piece of legislation was sponsored by State Senator Dana Dow of Waldoboro, co-sponsored by four Republican and four Democratic lawmakers, and passed with [overwhelming majorities](#) in both the House and Senate. LD1711 expanded NEB in Maine by lifting the cap of nine participants per project, and instead placed a cap on the production capacity of Community Solar projects at five (5) megawatts (MW). One MW of solar generated electricity can power up to 130 Maine homes. Net Energy Billing is governed by [P.L. 2019 c. 478, Chapter 312](#), & [Chapter 313](#) of the Maine Public Utilities Commission rules.

The overall footprint of Community Solar projects were capped at 20 acres. These and other features incorporated into LD1711 resulted in the development of a comprehensive Community Solar program designed to attract developers and private investment to Maine for the purpose of constructing Community Solar farms. These projects are now available to Maine businesses, non-profit organizations, and homeowners / renters to participate in through a no-cost, subscription-based model. Maine’s Community Solar program now makes the benefits of solar electricity available to all.

The [Maine Office of the Public Advocate](#), whose primary responsibility is to represent the interests of Maine utility consumers, provides this [video statement](#) on Community Solar and offers this [handout](#). Ampion encourages outreach to Kiera Reardon, Consumer Advisor at MEOPA by phone at (207) 624-3687 or email at Kiera.Reardon@maine.gov.

