

Maine Net Energy Billing Program

IREC developed the National Shared Renewables Scorecard to provide policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders with a tool for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of state shared renewable energy programs. IREC graded **Maine's Net Energy Billing Program** using the Scorecard's full criteria* and found that the program currently receives a **B-**, indicating that it has room for improvement but **reflects many best practices critical for shared renewable energy development**. [Note: The Net Energy Billing program's grade went from a C+ to a B- due to legislation that reinstated a retail rate bill credit value and increased the system size capacity limit.]

Category	Criterion	Description	Program Grade
General Program Details	Aggregate Capacity Limit	Does the program have an unlimited aggregate capacity ?	✓
	Tracking & Reporting Requirements	Does the program specifically require the utility or other relevant entity to provide publicly available data regarding installed and queued capacity that is updated on at least an annual basis?	✓
	Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) Consumer Participation	Does the program have specific component(s) to promote LMI customer participants (e.g., capacity carve-out or target?)	✗
		Does the program explicitly address financial barriers faced by LMI participants (e.g., incentives or on-bill financing)?	✗
Does the program have specific requirements re LMI customer marketing, education and outreach ?		✗	
Customers and Subscriptions	Eligibility	Are all customer classes eligible for the program?	✓
	Portability	Does the program explicitly permit portability (i.e., allow participants to move within the utility service territory and take their subscription with them)?	✗
	Transferability	Does the program explicitly permit transferability (i.e., allow participants to leave the program or service territory and transfer their subscriptions to others?)	✓
Generation Systems	System Capacity Limit	Is the system size limit at least 5 megawatts (MW) ?	✓
	Siting Requirements	Does the program allow both on-site and off-site facilities?	✓
		Can the facility and customers be located anywhere within the utility service territory?	✓
		Do the program rules explicitly address whether or not facilities can be co-located ?	✗
Ownership & Management	Are third-party facility ownership and management permitted?	✓	
Bill Credits	Valuation	Does the program meet one of the following conditions: 1) Bill credit is valued at the utility's retail rate; 2) Bill credit includes values for generation and at least some portion of the transmission and/or distribution charges; or 3) RECs are used to provide value in addition to bill credit.	✓
		Is the valuation methodology clearly articulated in the statute, rule, and/or tariff?	✓
	Unsubscribed Generation	Is unsubscribed generation clearly treated and valued at least at an avoided cost rate?	✗
Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)	Subscribed RECs	Are subscribed RECs clearly treated?	✗
	Unsubscribed RECs	Are unsubscribed RECs clearly treated?	✗
State Program Grade:			B-

Program Strengths

- ✓ **Compensates shared renewable energy generation at the retail rate.**
- ✓ **Clearly articulates the valuation methodology.**
- ✓ **Allows shared renewable energy facilities to be located either on-site or off-site.**
- ✓ **Explicitly permits customers to transfer their subscriptions if they leave the program or service territory.**

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Add specific components to promote access for low- to moderate-income customer participation.** The current program does not have any such components.
- **Explicitly permit customers to keep their subscriptions if they move within the same utility's service territory.** Portability is not addressed in the current rules.
- **Increase the frequency of reporting of installed and queued capacity.** Though the program currently receives credit for requiring biannual reporting, the best practice is to require at least monthly reporting.

*Note: The criteria above are a subset of the full criteria used to arrive at the state grades but reflect the most substantial program design components. For more information about the Scorecard, including the full criteria applied to grade state programs and definitions for many of the terms within the criteria, see <https://sharedrenewablescorecard.org/>. January 2020