

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2011

Legislative Document

No. 761

H.P. 568

House of Representatives, March 1, 2011

An Act To Provide Rebates for the Purchase of Certain Solar and Wind Power Equipment

Reference to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Clerk

Presented by Representative BERRY of Bowdoinham.
Cosponsored by Representative FITTS of Pittsfield, Senator RECTOR of Knox and
Representatives: BEAVERS of South Berwick, BECK of Waterville, DION of Portland,
FLEMINGS of Bar Harbor, HINCK of Portland, LUCHINI of Ellsworth, Senators:
FARNHAM of Penobscot, KATZ of Kennebec.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §10112-A** is enacted to read:

3 **§10112-A. Solar and wind energy rebate program**

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
5 following terms have the following meanings.

6 A. "Qualified solar energy system" means a solar photovoltaic system or a solar
7 thermal system.

8 B. "Qualified solar thermal water system installer" means a person who has been
9 certified by the trust to install solar thermal systems designed to heat water and who
10 holds a current license from the State as a master plumber, as a master oil burner
11 technician or as a propane and natural gas technician or has been certified as a type II,
12 type III or universal heating, ventilation and air conditioning refrigeration technician
13 through a certification program approved by the United States Environmental
14 Protection Agency.

15 C. "Qualified wind energy system" means any device, such as a wind charger,
16 windmill or wind turbine and associated facilities, with a peak generating capacity of
17 100 kilowatts or less that converts wind energy to electrical energy for use primarily
18 in a residence, public facility or place of business that is located in an area with
19 demonstrated wind power potential.

20 D. "Solar photovoltaic system" means a solar energy device with a peak generating
21 capacity of 100 kilowatts or less used for generating electricity for use in a residence
22 or place of business.

23 E. "Solar thermal system" means a configuration of solar collectors and a pump, heat
24 exchanger and storage tank or fans designed to heat water or air for the purpose of
25 space heating, domestic water heating or both space and domestic water heating.
26 Solar thermal system types include forced circulation, integral collector storage,
27 thermosyphon and self-pumping systems.

28 **2. Solar and wind energy rebate program.** To the extent that funds are available
29 in the fund established in subsection 5 and the requirements of subsection 3 are satisfied,
30 an owner or tenant of residential or commercial property located in the State is entitled to
31 a rebate for a qualified solar energy system that is installed in accordance with this
32 subsection after July 1, 2005 that will be connected to the electrical grid or a qualified
33 wind energy system that is installed in accordance with this subsection after January 1,
34 2009 that will be connected to the electrical grid. The trust shall set rebate levels for
35 qualified solar energy systems and qualified wind energy systems. In setting rebate levels,
36 the trust may consider market demand for qualified solar energy systems and qualified
37 wind energy systems, program implementation experience and other factors relevant to
38 the solar and wind energy rebate program.

39 A. To qualify for a rebate, a solar photovoltaic system must be installed by a master
40 electrician who has been certified by a North American board of certified energy

1 practitioners or by a master electrician working in conjunction with a person who has
2 been certified by a North American board of certified energy practitioners.

3 B. To qualify for a rebate, a solar thermal system designed to heat water must be
4 installed by a qualified solar thermal water system installer and, if the solar thermal
5 system is designed to heat potable water, it must be installed by a qualified solar
6 thermal water system installer who holds a current license as a master plumber or by
7 a qualified solar thermal water system installer working in conjunction with a master
8 plumber.

9 C. To qualify for a rebate, the electrical components of a qualified wind energy
10 system must be installed by a master electrician or by a factory-trained and approved
11 dealer for the qualified wind energy system working under the supervision of a
12 master electrician.

13 In the case of a newly constructed residence, the rebate must be available to the original
14 owner or occupant.

15 **3. Energy audit requirement; solar photovoltaic system.** To qualify for a rebate
16 for a solar photovoltaic system under this section, an owner or tenant of residential or
17 commercial property located in the State must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the trust
18 that an energy audit has been completed.

19 **4. Limitation to residents of State.** Participation in the solar and wind energy
20 rebate program established in this section is limited to residents of the State.

21 **5. Funding.** The commission shall assess transmission and distribution utilities to
22 collect funds for the solar and wind energy rebate program established in this section. The
23 amount of all assessments by the commission under this subsection must result in total
24 program expenditures by each transmission and distribution utility that do not exceed
25 0.005 cent per kilowatt-hour. To the extent practicable, the commission shall establish
26 and collect the assessment in a manner that is consistent with the assessment made under
27 section 10110. There is established a solar and wind energy rebate program fund to be
28 used by the trust solely for the purposes of this section. All assessments made under this
29 section must be transferred to the solar and wind energy rebate program fund. Any
30 interest on funds in the fund must be credited to the fund. Funds not spent in any fiscal
31 year remain in the fund to be used for the purposes of this section. The trust shall
32 determine the allotment of the fund in each fiscal year between solar photovoltaic system
33 rebates, solar thermal system rebates and qualified wind energy system rebates, with a
34 minimum of 20% of the fund provided to each of the 3 types of rebates.

35 **6. Repeal.** This section is repealed June 30, 2015.

36 SUMMARY

37 This bill reinstates the solar and wind energy rebate program, which provided rebates
38 for the purchase of certain solar and wind energy equipment, until June 30, 2015. The
39 program had expired December 31, 2010.