



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Alice Elliott, Sierra Club Maine
Date: May 17, 2019
Re: Testimony in Support of LD #1679An Act to Establish the Maine Climate Change Council to Assist Maine to Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change

Senator Carson, Representative Tucker and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Alice Elliott, I am Chapter Director of Sierra Club Maine. I represent 18,000 Sierra Club Maine supporters and members.

We salute the Governor and her Commissioners for developing this far reaching proposal to address Climate Change, the most serious threat to the future of our state. This bill obviously was the result of enormous effort and we commend you for identifying the array of guidelines to move forward. The ultimate goals are more stringent than the Maine Green New Deal Bill and thus address the urgency that we all feel is necessary. Again, we commend you on this set of goals.

We believe that there are ways to improve LD #1679to involve a more inclusive process, and so deliver an outcome that achieves the greatest possible engagement and action by the widest set of constituencies thence achieving the essential outcome.

- 1) We urge you to set the evidenced based goals of 100% electrical renewable energy by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050. Access to GHG pollution free electricity is essential to deep reduction in overall GHG pollution. Not only is electricity generation from fossil fuels a source of GHG pollution, but also GHG free electricity will permit rapid reductions in other sectors such as transportation and heating.
- 2.) In order to promote progressive utility governance, language should either include "consumer owned utility" or exclude" investor owned utility" to allow for other governance/ownership, as is before the Legislature currently.
- 3) While Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are mentioned in the Adaptation and Resilience strategies, the bill should promote a just transition to equitable distribution and living wage jobs, not just stable jobs.
- 4) To make this a more democratic and inclusive process we recommend that there be self selecting groups which choose their own representatives for participation, to fully engage and encourage those populations.

Regional meetings that involve public participation to develop the working groups and outcomes would enhance the process. Perhaps by encouraging competitive efforts on the parts of various communities through offering incentives to develop creative programs meeting the Commission's objective criteria will further promote real involvement and better outcomes. Maine universities and colleges already actively engaged in developing adaptation strategies



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should be part of this process as a way of achieving the most forward-looking programs while also engaging more youth.

5) We believe that there should be a fiscal note on this bill in addition to grant applications. The enormity of the project and the forward-looking effort by the state should have some buy in by all.

Sierra Club strongly endorses the wisdom of following multiple pathways. LD #1679 wisely notes that reducing greenhouse emissions is only one side of the coin. The other side is effectively using Maine's natural resources to clean unwanted carbon pollution from the atmosphere. For instance, as the most heavily forested state in the nation, Maine can and surely will take a leadership role in "encouraging the use of natural systems to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions." A groundbreaking study by the Nature Conservancy has shown that wise use of natural systems can contribute up to 20% of the reduction of carbon pollution needed by 2050.¹ Also, Drawdown places good stewardship of temperate forests as 12th out of 80 climate action pathways – above EVs and heat pumps.²

Many other exciting pathways are now visible for natural systems such as regenerative agriculture. Public transportation, micro grids, and more provide great opportunities.

In summary, the Sierra Club Maine Chapter strongly commends the Governor's LD #1679 and believes it holds great promise for addressing the pressing problems of greenhouse gas pollution and climate disruption. We encourage the Committee to take the opportunity LD #1679 provides to move forward by amending it to add greater inclusion and broader participation in the language, as we have suggested.

We ask this committee to vote LD #1679 with some adjustment
Ought to Pass.

¹ Forgione, J et al (2018) Natural climate solutions for the United States Science Advances 14 Nov 2018 : eaat1869

² Hawken, P ed. (2017) Drawdown: the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming New York, NY: Penguin Books