



To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Ezra Sassaman, Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Date: April 13, 2023

Re: Testimony in opposition to LD 1363: An Act to Support Extraction of Common Minerals by Amending the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and the members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I am writing as a representative for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 460 youth from across the state who are fighting for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. I am writing in opposition to LD 1363.

Lithium mining is environmentally and socially harmful. More than half the world's current lithium production is very water intensive and takes place in regions blighted by water shortages likely to worsen due to the climate crisis. Although lithium extraction has been occurring for a relatively short period of time, this practice already has a track record of land and water pollution, ecosystem destruction and violations against Indigenous and rural communities.¹

Furthermore, lithium takes the form of spodumene in Maine. Mining lithium in this form is significantly more chemical and energy intensive than obtaining lithium from other sources.

For these reasons, keeping lithium mining at as low as possible is crucial for frontline communities, those who will already be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. An overreliance on mass producing personal electric vehicles (EVs) to meet our climate goals ignores these harms.

¹ Nina Lakhani, "[Revealed: how US transition to electric cars threatens environmental havoc](#)", *Guardian*, January 24, 2023. Accessed April 13, 2023.

Rather than expanding lithium mining to keep up with U.S. car dependency, Maine must use this resource sparingly and actively invest in and incentive clean public transportation alternatives. As a January 2023 study found, “Policies that increase and incentivize active and mass transit, lower the size of EVs and their batteries, and responsibly source their minerals will support a rapid and equitable transportation transition by reducing the battery demand of a zero-carbon transportation future.”²

For the above reasons, our coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, urges you to vote ought-not-to-pass on LD 1363. Thank you.

² Thea Riofrancos et al., “[Achieving Zero Emissions with More Mobility and Less Mining](#)”, *Climate and Community Project*, January 2023. Accessed April 13, 2023.