

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: April 24, 2023

Re: LD 1621 *An Act Regarding Environmental Justice* OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and Honorable members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Director of Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate crisis. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030.

MCAN uses the lens of equity to determine our focus on steps towards a just transition. In doing so we have found that our work in Maine is hampered by the lack of a definition in statute of “environmental justice populations”. LD 1621 directs the Department of Environmental Protection to define “environmental justice populations”. While it is well recognized that there are populations that bear the brunt of the climate crisis in myriad ways we need a legal definition reflecting this and thus allowing fair and equitable considerations and engagement by the DEP as a start.

MCAN supports LD 1621. We see the necessity of this bill toward ensuring meaningful participation by environmental justice communities in Maine. We believe that everyone needs to be involved if we are to combat the climate crisis. The first step is for communities to have the opportunity to be heard; to know that their concerns will impact the decisions being made and for them to be able to see how their input is influencing the decision making. It is important that all Mainers are able to participate in protecting their lives, futures and communities from environmental burdens.

The appropriations and allocations outlined in LD 1621 for the DEP would allow for the facilitating of inclusion of environmental justice populations by funding translator services, travel expenses, appropriate venue rental fees; along with a Public Service Coordinator to ensure the outreach and participation of those communities often overlooked in our processes which deeply impact their lives.

LD 1621 offers procedural equity for environmental justice populations and frontline communities through enabling equitable participation in the Department of Environmental Protection’s decision-making processes. This is necessary for achieving authentic equity in Maine’s environmental protection. We urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS for LD 1621. Thank you.

Amy Eshoo  
Maine Climate Action Now  
LD 1621

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and Honorable members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Director of Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate crisis. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030.

MCAN uses the lens of equity to determine our focus on steps towards a just transition. In doing so we have found that our work in Maine is hampered by the lack of a definition in statute of “environmental justice populations”. LD 1621 directs the Department of Environmental Protection to define “environmental justice populations”. While it is well recognized that there are populations that bear the brunt of the climate crisis in myriad ways we need a legal definition reflecting this and thus allowing fair and equitable considerations and engagement by the DEP as a start.

MCAN supports LD 1621. We see the necessity of this bill toward ensuring meaningful participation by environmental justice communities in Maine. We believe that everyone needs to be involved if we are to combat the climate crisis. The first step is for communities to have the opportunity to be heard; to know that their concerns will impact the decisions being made and for them to be able to see how their input is influencing the decision making. It is important that all Mainers are able to participate in protecting their lives, futures and communities from environmental burdens.

The appropriations and allocations outlined in LD 1621 for the DEP would allow for the facilitating of inclusion of environmental justice populations by funding translator services, travel expenses, appropriate venue rental fees; along with a Public Service Coordinator to ensure the outreach and participation of those communities often overlooked in our processes which deeply impact their lives.

LD 1621 offers procedural equity for environmental justice populations and frontline communities through enabling equitable participation in the Department of Environmental Protection’s decision-making processes. This is necessary for achieving authentic equity in Maine’s environmental protection. We urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS for LD 1621. Thank you.