

Katie Brydon
Bangor
LD 1073

Chair and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 1073, “An Act to Amend Provisions of the Maine Metallic Mining Mineral Act to Advance Health Equity and Improve the Well-being of Vulnerable Populations.”

My commitment to Maine is deeply personal. Like many others, I chose to make Maine my home because of its unparalleled natural beauty and strong, unwavering commitment to land stewardship. It's the pristine forests, the clear rivers, and the vibrant ecosystems that drew me—and so many others—to Maine and its promise of a healthy and sustainable future. This is the Maine I want to preserve, not just for myself but for generations to come.

However, the threat posed by metallic mining casts a long shadow over this promise. The scientific evidence is clear: metallic mining is inherently destructive. The EPA and WHO studies document the devastating impacts on water quality, air purity, and soil health.

We know that:

- **Water Contamination:** Mining can release toxic substances like arsenic, lead, and mercury into our precious water sources, jeopardizing the very foundation of our ecosystems and our drinking water.
- **Air Pollution:** The particulate matter and pollutants from mining operations can contribute to respiratory problems, directly impacting the health of our communities.
- **Soil Degradation:** The destruction of topsoil can lead to long-term environmental damage, impacting the very lands we cherish.

Maine faces a unique challenge: an aging population and a critical need to attract new residents to support our infrastructure, and businesses, and build a resilient economy. Thankfully, our state possesses a powerful asset: its natural beauty. In an era of increasing climate instability, people are seeking safe havens, and Maine's unspoiled environment is a beacon. We are already seeing an influx of climate refugees who are drawn to our state's relative stability and natural splendor.

However, the threat of metallic mining poses a grave danger to this vital asset. To allow such destructive practices, especially in light of the 2017 presidential executive order, would be a profound step backward, undermining the very qualities that make Maine so attractive.

LD 1073 is not just a piece of legislation; it's a lifeline for our state's future. It provides the crucial protections we need:

- **Comprehensive health assessments:** Ensuring that potential risks are understood and mitigated before they harm our communities.
- **'Right to Know' for affected communities:** Empowering residents with the information they need to protect themselves and their families.
- **Long-term monitoring:** Safeguarding our environment from the lasting impacts of toxic waste.
- **Preventative measures:** Stopping violations before they occur.

As a resident of Maine, I feel a deep responsibility to protect the very essence of what makes this state so special. We cannot allow the potential for short-term economic gains to jeopardize the long-term health and well-being of our communities and our environment.

I urge you, members of the committee, to consider the profound impact this bill will have on the future of Maine. Please, for the sake of our children, for the preservation of our natural heritage, and for the commitment to land stewardship that defines us, vote in favor of LD 1073.

Thank you for your consideration.

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