

Sherri Billings  
Fryeburg  
LD 1073

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Sherri Billings, and I live in Fryeburg, Maine. I am testifying in strong support of 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."

Maine's natural environment and the health of its people are invaluable assets that must be protected. Metallic mining, recognized globally as one of the most destructive human activities, poses an unacceptable risk to our communities. LD 1073 takes necessary steps to ensure that the people of Maine, especially those in vulnerable populations, are safeguarded from the devastating impacts of mining operations.

The requirement for a comprehensive baseline health assessment, followed by ongoing evaluations, is a vital measure to track and mitigate health impacts over time. Without these proactive assessments, we risk ignoring the true costs of mining on public health.

Additionally, granting communities a 'Right to Know' is fundamental to maintaining transparency. Residents deserve to be informed in real-time about the risks of exposure to toxic materials. This fosters public awareness and ensures that those most affected are equipped to protect themselves and their families.

LD 1073 also mandates responsible long-term monitoring of toxic waste. Mining companies must bear the financial responsibility for monitoring and remediation, rather than passing these burdens onto taxpayers. The damage caused by mining waste can persist for generations, and it is only fair that companies are held accountable for the lasting impacts of their operations.

In contrast, I urge you to oppose LD 795, "An Act to Exempt Pegmatite Mining from the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act and Establish a Permit-by-rule Process." Creating loopholes for specific types of mining sets a dangerous precedent and weakens the robust protections Maine has worked hard to establish. Exemptions undermine our commitment to environmental stewardship and public health.

Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of Maine's people and environment. I respectfully ask you to support LD 1073 and reject LD 795. Our communities deserve the strongest protections possible.

Sincerely,  
Sherri Billings