



Testimony in Support of LD 795:

“An Act to Exempt Pegmatite Mining from the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act and Establish a Permit-by-rule Process”

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 795.

Streamlining Regulations for Small-Scale Mining Operations

LD 795 takes a common-sense approach to distinguish small-scale pegmatite mining from large-scale metallic mineral mining. By exempting pegmatite mining from the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act and instead allowing a permit-by-rule process, this bill recognizes the unique nature of pegmatite deposits while maintaining reasonable environmental and safety standards under Maine’s existing quarrying laws.

Maine’s rich geological history includes significant pegmatite deposits that contain valuable minerals such as feldspar, mica, and lithium-bearing minerals. These resources are in high demand for various industrial, technological, and clean energy applications. However, the current regulatory framework treats pegmatite mining like large-scale metallic mining operations, imposing unnecessary burdens on small businesses and prospectors.

Encouraging Economic Growth and Local Industry

LD 795 would benefit Maine’s small-scale miners and local economies by:

- Reducing regulatory hurdles that currently discourage investment in pegmatite mining.
- Allowing local entrepreneurs to responsibly extract and sell pegmatite minerals without facing excessive fees and permitting requirements for sizeable metallic mining projects.
- Promoting job creation in rural communities where pegmatite deposits are found, supporting Maine-based industries that rely on these minerals for commercial and artistic purposes.

Pegmatite mining does not pose the same environmental risks as large-scale metallic mining, making applying the same stringent regulations unnecessary. The 20-acre limit



imposed by LD 795 ensures that environmental protections remain in place while allowing small-scale operations to function efficiently.

Maintaining Environmental and Public Safety Protections

LD 795 strikes a responsible balance by ensuring that pegmatite mining remains subject to Maine's existing quarrying laws, which already include:

- Site reclamation requirements to restore mined areas.
- Environmental protection standards to prevent undue harm to ecosystems.
- Public safety regulations to ensure responsible mining practices.

This approach ensures that Maine's natural beauty and environmental integrity are preserved while allowing for responsible mineral extraction.

Aligning with Market Needs and Maine's Competitive Advantage

The demand for lithium-bearing minerals and other pegmatite resources is skyrocketing due to their critical role in energy storage, electronics, and manufacturing. Maine can capitalize on this demand while ensuring that mining operations are safe, environmentally responsible, and economically viable. Increasing the state's supply of lithium would even be likely to help our state reach its emissions reduction goals due to lithium's crucial role in electrification and green energy production.¹

By removing unnecessary bureaucratic barriers, LD 795 allows Maine to compete with other states that already have more streamlined permitting processes for similar types of mining. Small business owners and prospectors should not be held to the same standards as large-scale mining operations—this bill ensures that Maine remains business-friendly and economically competitive.

Conclusion

LD 795 is a pragmatic regulatory reform that promotes economic development, job creation, and responsible natural resource management while maintaining necessary environmental safeguards. Maine can support small businesses, local industries, and the state's mineral economy without imposing excessive regulatory burdens by allowing pegmatite mining to proceed under a permit-by-rule process. For these reasons, we urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 795.

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<https://lithiumharvest.com/knowledge/green-energy-transition/how-lithium-is-powering-the-renewable-energy-revolution/#:~:text=Solar%20energy%20systems%20convert%20sunlight,low%20sunlight%20or%20high%20demand>.



Thank you for your time and consideration.