

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: March 24, 2025

Re: 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

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a coalition of fifteen nonprofit organizations from across Maine united by a desire to progress our state forward.

From our perspective as an environmental justice organization, we understand that extractive operations like mining are often sited in or near low-income communities and lands under tribal stewardship. These communities often bear the brunt of toxicity, water pollution, and the other negative environmental effects associated with mining.

Although mining companies often claim a commitment to environmental and workplace safety, the penalty for violations can end up being just a small portion of profits they reap, regardless of the environmental destruction they have caused. For many mining companies, paying for clean up afterwards is simply considered a cost of doing business. But because these negative effects are often so drastic, rehabilitating land and water can take decades and they often will never be restored to the way they were before mining operations started. There is no amount of money that can fix this. Instead, we need stronger regulations in the first place.

That is why we support LD 1073 adding a comprehensive baseline health assessment and periodic reevaluation for communities that live near mining operations. We also support granting a 'Right to Know' status to affected nearby communities in a transparent and public manner. This will allow communities to understand the risks from potential exposure to toxic materials from mining operations. We also support how LD 1073 requires toxic waste monitoring after mines are closed for as long as risk persists, not for an arbitrary length of time. The health and economic burden should never be placed on communities, even long after the mining operations have been terminated.

For the above reasons, we urge you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 1073. Thank you.