

Elizabeth Sekera
Bangor
LD 795

Testimony in Opposition to LD 795

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

To the Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,
My name is Elizabeth Sekera and I am writing in strong opposition to LD 795. As a Registered Nurse and Population Health Manager with 20 years of experience working with Medicaid and the populations it serves, I have dedicated my career to addressing health disparities and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left unprotected.

Senator Joseph Martin's proposal to exempt pegmatite mining from the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act undermines critical environmental and public health protections. By establishing a permit-by-rule process, this bill weakens regulatory oversight, removing essential safeguards that help prevent harmful health and environmental consequences. Mining, even for materials like pegmatite, can introduce heavy metals and other contaminants into the air, water, and soil—posing significant risks to nearby residents, particularly those in low-income and rural areas who already face barriers to healthcare access.

Accountability in mining operations is crucial to preventing long-term health consequences and financial strain on our healthcare system. Without strict oversight, communities will bear the cost of unchecked pollution—both in their health and through increased Medicaid expenditures for treating preventable conditions. We must prioritize comprehensive data collection and responsible regulatory practices to mitigate these risks, rather than loosening protections that safeguard public health. I urge you to reject LD 795 and uphold Maine's commitment to environmental responsibility and the well-being of its residents. Weakening mining regulations is not in the best interest of public health, and it is imperative that we maintain strong oversight to prevent preventable harm.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Sekera
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