

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Denise Harlow, and I live in Oquossoc. I am testifying in support of LD 1073: An Act to Amend Provisions of the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act to Advance Health Equity and Improve the Well-being of Vulnerable Populations.

I was a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee from the 125<sup>th</sup> through the 128<sup>th</sup> legislative sessions when the mining regulations were changed. There were 2 members on the ENR committee who served in all 4 of the sessions when the mining law was changed. I was one of the 2. The bill, which passed in 2017, allowed mining in Maine for the first time since the 1980s. Previously, groundwater contamination was not allowed and, thus, it was a defacto ban. While working on the mining changes, we did not talk about protecting human health prior to mining activities. Instead, our discussions centered around the environmental parameters that companies would be expected to meet as they

mined and what would happen if the standards were broken. This does not protect human health as a violation means the pollution and damage has already begun. If the laws were violated, the violators would be punished or asked to stop mining. However, after an environmental disaster happens, it is too late to protect human health. The damage is done.

LD 1073 identifies the specific metrics that can be used to approach potential health issues from mining in a proactive way rather than waiting until a mine is not in compliance and human health has been impacted. LD 1073 addresses potential health impacts in advance and requires the mining company to prove in advance that mining will not impact vulnerable populations, such as children and the sick, rather than waiting until costly health problems occur that cannot be reversed. How many times will we allow destructive industries to harm the precious health of Maine people? Please support this bill and close one of the gaping holes in the legislation from 2017.

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