

**To:** Committee on the Judiciary

**From:** Marianne Hill, Ph.D., Economist, Sierra Club Maine

**Date:** April 6, 2025

**Re:** Testimony in support of LD1262

An Act to Improve Government Transparency and Accountability by Establishing a Process to Allow a Person to Require the State to Enforce Certain Laws and Rules.

Senate Chair Anne Carney; Representative Chair Amy Kuhn; and members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary,

I am writing in support of LD1262, a bill which could greatly improve the workings of our democracy in Maine, and so instill greater confidence in government and belief in the importance of citizen engagement.

**As the new administration slashes environmental and other protections for citizens and planet, this bill offers a means of ensuring that the will of the people in fact matters. Citizens deserve the right to petition for enforcement of environmental and other regulations. They should also be able to petition for protections that they feel the relevant state agencies are not providing. For such petitions to be effective, funds would be required to pay for supporting research and in some cases legal counsel. Under LD1262, a special fund in the Attorney General's office would be set up for citizen petitioners, financed by fees levied on polluters and others who are causing citizens harm.**

For example, Maine's Public Employees' Retirement System is required to divest holdings of fossil fuel corporations from its portfolio by 2026 under LD99, but scant progress has been made. Citizen referenda also are at risk of being ignored - the added income tax brackets voters supported have not happened. The fight against climate change is lagging - progress toward building EV charging stations and the acquisition of light-duty electric vehicles by the DOT has slowed.

Each of you doubtless knows of other examples. I expect that you will agree that government transparency and accountability can be improved. This bill offers an admirable step in that direction and I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD1262. Thank you for your work on behalf of the state - it is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Marianne Hill, Ph.D. (Yale '83)  
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Marianne Hill  
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LD 1262

LD1262 offers an important means of protecting Maine in the coming years.  
Testimony attached. Marianne Hill, Economist