

April 11, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

LD 1242—An Act to incentivize the Construction of Solar Carport Canopies and Solar Chargers at Highway Picnic Areas

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

Maine Audubon and The Nature Conservancy thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony **in support of LD 1242, *An Act to incentivize the Construction of Solar Carport Canopies and Solar Chargers at Highway Picnic Areas***. Maine Audubon is the state's oldest and largest wildlife conservation nonprofit. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends.

Our organizations support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of our state, and advocate for recommendations and strategies to accomplish this that are laid out in Maine Won't Wait, the state's climate action plan.¹ This includes efforts to decarbonize the transportation sector, which is responsible for the largest share of emissions in Maine.²

LD 1242 seeks to encourage the development of solar carport canopies and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, which we support for several reasons:

1. Solar that is sited alongside load and in already developed areas helps get renewable energy onto the grid with minimal impact.

Generation sited alongside load (like solar panels co-located with the EV charger), is an efficient way to build and use renewable energy as it minimizes the need to build costly transmission infrastructure. Additionally, an electric vehicle powered with sunshine is significantly preferred to an electric vehicle powered with a mix of whatever is on the ISO-NE grid at that moment (which could include natural gas, nuclear, hydro, and others).³ To meet our state climate goals we need to electrify everything (including transportation), and power that electricity with renewable sources of generation. LD 1242 is a small but meaningful step towards doing both at once.

¹ *Maine Won't Wait*, November 2024,

https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/2024-11/MWW_2024_Book_112124.pdf

² Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Air Quality, *Tenth Biennial Report on Progress toward Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals*, June 2024,

<https://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=12796425&an=1>

³ ISO- New England Resource Mix, 2024, <https://www.iso-ne.com/about/key-stats/resource-mix>

More so, siting solar canopies alongside EV chargers in parking lots and rest areas maximizes the use of that pre-developed land. The transition to a 100% zero-carbon economy will require significant new generation and transmission capacity, and any efforts that can be made to minimize land use impacts and ensure generation is sited in the right locations will benefit both the people and nature of Maine.

2. Additional charging infrastructure to support EV deployment is needed to help meet our state climate goals.

Maine Won't Wait, the 2024 State Climate Action Plan identified access to reliable, convenient, and affordable charging as critical to EV adoption. Electrifying transportation is the most effective way to curb greenhouse gas emissions from Maine's transportation sector, and expanding EV charging infrastructure is one of the key strategies identified in *Maine Won't Wait*.⁴

Maine Audubon and The Nature Conservancy fully support efforts to electrify transportation and transportation infrastructure with well-sited renewable energy, and **we urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1242**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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⁴ *Maine Won't Wait*, November 2024,
https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/2024-11/MWW_2024_Book_112124.pdf