

Ruth Poland  
Bar Harbor  
LD 1543

RE: Testimony in support of L.D. 1543 “An Act to Establish the Green Schools Network”

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Ruth Poland, and I am a science teacher at the Mount Desert Island High School in Bar Harbor, where I also live and am a parent of two young children in the local public schools.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1543 “An Act to Establish the Green Schools Network”. I believe our society has a responsibility to address climate change, but beyond that, I believe showing our young people that the adults in their lives care and that we are seeking solutions is essential in raising engaged, optimistic and passionate new citizens. School staff and teachers can struggle to initiate projects that address their schools’ carbon emissions or climate justice due to a lack of time, information, and resources. A Green Schools Network would provide exactly this sort of support and a platform for those who have been successful to share their strategies.

I have been a leader of sustainability initiatives in my school for the past eight years and I often find myself isolated and wondering what other schools have tried in the past, what initiatives others are pursuing, what grants might be available and so many other questions that a school network is essential to answering. I have sought support from other schools, connecting with the Camden Hills Five Towns High School’s “Wind Planners” and the nascent RSU #1 Climate Resilience Task Force, and have seen the immense benefit myself of networking with these state leaders in student-led initiatives, climate curricula, and district organizing for building and policy improvements.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage you to support L.D. 1543. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Ruth Poland, Science Teacher & Sustainability Coordinator at Mount Desert Island High School