

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Will Cogswell, 45 Chestnut St., Bath, ME 04530
Date: April 24, 2025

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 Will Cogswell, and I am an English Language Arts teacher at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham. I write to you in support of L.D. 1543 “An Act to Establish the Green Schools Network” because I believe that it would provide the support and networks that teachers need to advance environmental, outdoor, and climate education in our state’s schools.

While teaching environmental literacy is an interdisciplinary endeavor, I know from experience that there are limited opportunities in our state for secondary teachers in subjects outside of the sciences to develop the knowledge and skills to meaningfully incorporate environmental education into our disciplines. Despite my own desire to make climate education a part of my practice and curriculum, I did not feel equipped to do so until last year, when I participated in the Maine Climate Teacher Institute. In that experience, the conversations with other humanities educators — the network the institute provided — were just as valuable as the professional development. This bill offers the opportunity to develop a similar professional network state-wide.

I have spoken with many area colleagues who, like me, strongly believe that outdoor, environmental, and climate learning should happen across a school day but who need a network of support to help them take steps to make that happen in their own classes. For them and for all of us striving toward green teaching for a greener future, I respectfully encourage you to support L.D. 1543. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Will Cogswell