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Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

RE: LD 1473—An Act to Require Utilities to Monitor Meters for Natural Gas Leaks

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Karen Blakelock and I work as the climate and energy policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to submit **comments in support of LD 1473**.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

The Conservancy's mission is to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. Human induced climate change is harming communities across the country and around the world, and we must implement science-informed policies to reduce our emissions. Methane, the primary ingredient of natural gas, traps over 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere. This fact makes reducing unnecessary methane emission a significant near-term opportunity and crucial step to achieving climate related emissions reduction targets.

Oil and gas extraction, processing and distribution account for roughly 1/3 of U.S. methane emissions.¹ The same leaks that lead to natural gas waste also release toxic and smog-forming pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene, which threaten the health of millions of people living in nearby communities. The benefits of reducing methane pollution are clear.

The oil and gas industry increasingly agrees. Individual companies and consensus-driven trade associations, like the American Petroleum Institute, support federal standards directly regulating methane emissions. Cost-effective tools and off-the-shelf technologies exist to find and plug methane leaks.²

I ask that you **vote Ought to Pass on LD 1473**. I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/natural-gas-star-program/estimates-methane-emissions-segment-united-states#Overview>

² ¹ <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/blog/2021/01/21/api-stands-ready-to-work-with-biden-administration-on-methane-regulation>