

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now
Date: May 1, 2025
Re: LD 861: An Act Related to the Work of the Public Advocate

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now! (MCAN), a coalition of grassroots nonprofits across Maine united by a desire to progress our state forward and engage in transformative action in response to the climate crisis.

In an increasingly polarized political atmosphere, it's often hard to get Americans to widely agree on almost any issue. However, polling shows people widely feel that big money, special interests, and self-interested politicians negatively affect our political landscape. In fact, the public perception of governmental and political institutions is at an all-time low. This distrust is fueled by persistent concerns of elected officials choosing financial self-interest over public service, with around 63% of polled Americans believing all or most politicians are motivated by selfishness rather than a genuine desire to serve the people they represent.¹

This is the background in which legislation like LD 861 exists and why it is so important. Preserving a healthy democracy means avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest in elected and appointed officials. Maine and other states need to do a better job opening up the political process to people who genuinely want to make the world better while preventing greedy and selfish people from gaming the system in a way that betrays the spirit of public service.

Our state can help restore public trust by enacting safeguards like LD 861 to disrupt the revolving door between regulators and the companies they are trusted to regulate. If enforced properly, this legislation will begin healing the divide between large swaths of working people who see their prospects stagnating and special interests who continue amassing wealth at the expense of the public good. We need to restore trust.

For the above-listed reasons, we encourage you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 861. Thank you.

¹Andy Cerda and Andrew Daniller. "[7 facts about Americans' views of money in politics](#)". *Pew Research Center*. October 23, 2023. Accessed April 29, 2025.