



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1138:

**“An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in
Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan”**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1138, “An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan.”

While the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a laudable aspiration, LD 1138 represents a significant and troubling expansion of government control over Maine's transportation infrastructure and personal mobility, which can be detrimental to economic growth, individual freedom, and rural communities.

Government Overreach and Economic Harm

LD 1138 mandates that the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) adopt comprehensive rules governing emissions limits and reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). It subjects every major transportation project to stringent greenhouse gas “impact assessments.” It grants government agencies the power to alter, redesign, or completely halt infrastructure projects if they fail to align with arbitrary emissions targets.

This represents an unprecedented bureaucratic intrusion into decisions that should be local and market-driven. Transportation projects should be judged on their ability to improve safety, mobility, and economic opportunity, not on speculative projections about emissions decades into the future.

The requirement for induced demand modeling further undermines theoretical estimates of critical transportation investments. This could significantly delay or deter projects that would otherwise ease congestion, connect rural areas, or promote commerce. Worse, it risks driving up the costs of vital transportation improvements—costs that Maine taxpayers will inevitably bear.

Negative Impact on Rural and Working-Class Mainers

Maine's rural character demands flexible and robust transportation systems. Policies that intentionally reduce vehicle miles traveled will disproportionately hurt rural



Mainers, who rely on personal vehicles due to the lack of viable public transit alternatives. Imposing VMT reduction targets ignores the unique geographic realities of our state and unfairly penalizes those who live outside of urban cores.

Furthermore, the mitigation measures suggested—such as congestion pricing, expanding micromobility, or dense transit-oriented development—are all designed for congested urban areas. Not only will these policies further impose costs on Mainers who already face a high cost of living, but they are also impractical and even harmful for the vast majority of Mainers who rely on reliable roads to live, work, and thrive.

A Slippery Slope Toward Transportation Control

This bill lays the groundwork for a future in which vehicle ownership and use are regulated not for safety, necessity, or opportunity reasons, but for ideological environmental goals. Already, under LD 1138, transportation capacity expansions—such as adding highway lanes—could be severely limited unless unrelated programs like transit expansion or urban densification efforts accompany them.

Maine should be cautious about embedding climate action plans into binding transportation law, especially given the poor track record of such top-down plans elsewhere. States and countries that have pursued aggressive transportation emissions mandates have faced spiraling costs, declining infrastructure quality, and significant public backlash.^{1 2 3}

Conclusion

LD 1138 is a heavy-handed, one-size-fits-all mandate that threatens to raise costs, limit freedom, and diminish Maine's economic competitiveness. Instead of empowering bureaucrats to micromanage transportation decisions based on speculative climate models, the Legislature should prioritize local control, practical transportation improvements, and economic opportunity.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to reject LD 1138. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<https://www.truckpartsandservice.com/commentary/article/15679836/aggressive-emission-regulation-will-drive-up-costs-everywhere>

² <https://news.yahoo.com/clean-air-mandates-exacerbating-dearth-120025676.html>

³

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/2025/02/21/should-california-back-off-on-2026-zero-emission-car-mandates/79427217007/>