



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: Andrew Blunt, Sierra Club Maine
Date: April 30, 2025
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 1138: *An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan***

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I write on behalf of the Sierra Club Maine Chapter, representing over 22,000 supporters and members in Maine and 3.8 million members nationwide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations, and we're working diligently to combat climate change and promote a just and sustainable future for all people.

To that end, we urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on L.D. 1138.

Over half of Maine's carbon emissions come from transportation. That means that any meaningful conversation about addressing the impacts of climate change that we have in Maine must start with transportation and any transportation conversation that we have in Maine must start with climate change.

However, today, our transportation planning decisions are being made without consideration of their climate impact. More often than not, that means building more roads or adding lanes to existing roads, and our limited taxpayer dollars going towards expensive projects that work against our pollution reduction targets.

For the first time, L.D. 1138 seeks to harmonize our transportation planning system with our climate goals. It proposes the following:

- Requiring the Department of Transportation to adopt rules necessary to ensure compliance with statewide greenhouse gas reduction targets
- Requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt rules establishing greenhouse gas emissions limits specific to different sources within the transportation sector
- Requiring the Department of Transportation to develop and publish an emissions reduction plan specific to the transportation sector in alignment with statewide targets, and a plan to reduce statewide vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in alignment with targets laid out in Maine's Climate Action Plan.
- Defining "capacity expansion projects" and requires that such projects are in accordance with plans to reduce statewide transportation emissions or that any increased emissions are mitigated properly

Once implemented, these rules changes will lead to Maine DOT creating more clean transportation options, like more frequent and reliable public transit and better walking and biking infrastructure. These things are not just an environmental issue, they're a quality-of-life issue. More transportation options means safer, healthier, and more economically secure communities.

We represent members across Maine, from downtown Portland to the northern tip of the county, who span the entire cross section of transportation needs facing Maine people. The one thing they all have in common as Sierra Club members is their commitment to protecting the environment and fighting climate change. Too often, they're limited in their transportation options: drive or stay home. For us at the Sierra Club, embracing transportation options that put people over cars is critical to the sustainable future that we want to see for Maine.

These reforms are also timely. Maine is growing, and as our communities grow, we need to ensure that our growth is responsible, and that we're building our communities toward a more sustainable, more just future. Our transportation system is generational, and we need to ensure that decisions made about this system are compatible with the ambitious climate goals that we are so proud of. It is more important than ever that state transportation planners take climate change into consideration when reviewing and approving transportation projects, and it will make a lasting impact on our statewide emissions for the entire lifetime of these projects.

For the above reasons, we urge an 'Ought to Pass' vote on L.D. 1138.

Sincerely,

Andrew Blunt
Sierra Club Maine Chapter
Legislative and Political Strategist