

To: Transportation Committee

From: Cole Cochrane, Clean Transportation Advocate

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1870, An Act to Establish a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program to Impose Penalties on Climate Polluters



Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee: My name is Cole Cochrane, I work at Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), an organization representing over 400 young working Mainers. I am also a current student at Harvard studying public policy and economics. I am here today to testify on behalf of MYCJ in support of LD 1870, An Act to Establish a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program to Impose Penalties on Climate Polluters.

Whenever I have testified either in this committee or others, the legislation in question is often in an optimistic, forward-looking manner. Usually invoking a sense of duty to invest in future generations and our state, the solutions we brought forward were systems-level reform. Strengthening the grid, expanding clean energy, reinvigorating our transportation system: these efforts not only curtailed climate pollution, but invested in a better tomorrow. However, this bill strikes a different tune. It shines a light on the perplexing magnitude of damage the climate crisis has already wrought upon hard-working Mainers. Regardless of how you measure that damage, we have seen roads, bridges, homes and churches washed away by intense natural disasters exacerbated by climate change. It does not take much to remember the disastrous toll the storms of December 2023 had on our communities. Totalling \$90 million in damages

towards public infrastructure statewide, it had acute effects on some of the communities even represented on this committee<sup>1</sup>:

- Representative Bridgeo, when the Kennebec river flooded along Water Street, businesses paid for the clean-up. Cushnoc Brewing, a beloved spot by some of the folks in this committee room, faced \$80,000 in repair costs— only \$30,000 was covered by the state.<sup>2</sup>
- Senator Martin, I recall flash flooding in Oxford county, particularly in the towns of Andover and Byron. That ultimately totaled \$2.6 million in infrastructural damages.<sup>3</sup>
- Representative Soboleski, you and your town came to the rescue for fellow members of your community when the Sand River Valley flooded, washing away the Number 6 road.<sup>4</sup>

These are merely a few examples as to how climate-related damages hit close to home. Yet what bothers me, and what ought to bother the committee as well, is who bears the brunt of these costs? It is a serious question. Maine can not, and should not, continue to shell out tens of millions every year, especially as natural disasters rapidly grow in size and force. However, someone has to foot the bill. Personally, I would rather see the multinational fossil fuel corporation who is rolling in \$36 billion in profit pay for *their* damages to our state, rather than the Mainer who simply is trying to earn an honest living.<sup>5</sup>

That is the thrust of LD 1870, motivating people from all walks of life to support this bill, because we are all founded on the idea that accountability is the cornerstone of justice. We are here to meet the moment, address the hardship working Mainers are facing, and ensure they are not burdened with the costs of a crisis they are not responsible for. I urge the honorable members of this committee to show the public that we hold those accountable, regardless of who

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<sup>1</sup> [Central Maine businesses continue recovery 1-year after devastating storm](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Cushnoc Brewing Co. continues work to recover year after devastating storm](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Gov. Mills requests disaster declaration from June rainstorms that damaged roads | Maine Public](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Phillips: Soboleski discusses involvement with remedying Number 6 Road flood - Daily Bulldog](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Big Oil Made Billions Amid the Hottest Year on Record](#)

they might be. Please consider voting “ought to pass” on LD 1870. Thank you for your time and service.

