



Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

May 5, 2025

RE: LD 1870, An Act to Establish a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program to Impose Penalties on Climate Polluters

Dear Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1870, *An Act to Establish a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program to Impose Penalties on Climate Polluters*.

Maine's ecosystems—its coasts, rivers, forests, and mountains—are the lifeblood of our state. They provide critical habitat for wildlife, support recreational and commercial industries, and define the character of our communities. However, these natural systems are increasingly under siege from climate-driven extreme weather events.

The late-2023 and early-2024 storms caused over \$90 million in damage to Maine's public infrastructure.¹ Flooding ravaged our coastal and riverfront towns, and landslides and washouts destabilized mountain communities. This damage didn't just harm roads and bridges—it also degraded wildlife habitats, disrupted breeding behavior and migration patterns, and polluted waterways with runoff and debris. From eroded nesting grounds for shorebirds to salmon-spawning rivers choked with sediment, the impacts of these storms have been both ecologically devastating and economically costly.

And this is only the beginning. Scientists warn that storms of this magnitude will grow more intense and frequent. Maine's municipalities, many already under-resourced, simply do not have the capacity to rebuild after every disaster, let alone prepare for the next one. While LD 1, *An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure* was just signed into law last month, was a bipartisan step in the right direction, it is not designed to address the long-term financial and

¹ Maine Department of Environmental Protection: <https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/2024-04/2024-4-26%20BIH%20WG%20meeting%20number%20and%20cost%20of%20spills.pdf>

environmental challenges of climate resilience. We cannot continue responding reactively, session after session, while the climate crisis accelerates.

LD 1870 presents a bold and necessary solution. It establishes a Climate Superfund, a forward-looking, fiscally responsible tool based on the “Polluter Pays” principle. Just as the federal Superfund law compelled polluters to clean up toxic waste sites, this law will require the world’s largest fossil fuel corporations—those that have emitted over 1 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases between 1995 and 2024—to pay for the damages their emissions have helped cause.

These companies, including ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron, and others, collectively earned over \$102 billion in profit in 2024 alone.² Meanwhile, Maine taxpayers are left footing the bill for the fallout of a crisis they didn’t create. The Climate Superfund will help shift that burden off our communities, without impacting gas prices or local businesses. It is a smart, targeted policy grounded in justice and economic prudence.

Importantly, LD 1870 ensures that at least 35% of all funds support climate adaptation projects in environmental justice communities—many of which include vulnerable wildlife corridors, low-income residents, and frontline habitats already suffering the brunt of climate change.

Our state’s wildlife and natural heritage are not separate from this conversation—they are part of the same vulnerable web that includes our towns, homes, and public infrastructure. If we hope to preserve Maine’s forests, wetlands, fisheries, and the species that depend on them, we must take proactive, systemic action now. LD 1870 gives us the mechanism to do just that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate

² EnergyProfits.org: <https://energy-profits.org/>