



Maine LD 1870

An Act to Establish a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program to Impose Penalties on Climate Polluters

Proponent Testimony

Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

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Co-Chairs Tepler and Doudera, and members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding LD 1870. My name is Cathy Becker, and I am the Responsible Finance Campaign Director for Green America, a national nonprofit founded in 1982 to harness the economic power of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society.

Green America is a strong proponent of LD 1870. This legislation would establish the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program in the Department of Environmental Protection. Under this program, a fossil fuel company responsible for more than 1 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions between 1994 and 2024 would be assessed a cost recovery for its share of emissions in the state of Maine. These payments would be deposited into a climate superfund that would provide funding to develop and implement climate change adaptation projects throughout the state, ensuring 35% of the funds are used for climate adaptation projects that benefit low-income people with environmental justice concerns.

In 2024, The United States saw [27 climate disasters](#) – floods, droughts, storms, fires -- costing \$1 billion or more. The total amount was \$187.2 billion, making it the costliest year on record. However, 2025 will likely eclipse 2024, as the January Los Angeles wildfires alone are estimated to cost [more than \\$250 billion](#).

Maine is no exception to these expenses. Climate change-driven storms caused \$90 million in damage to public infrastructure in 2024, with much more to private property. Sea level rise is expected to cause \$17.5 billion in coastal damage by 2050. Maine communities do not have the funding necessary to adapt to increasing extreme weather and climate disasters that threaten people and property.

Scientists agree that the chief cause of the climate crisis is the burning of fossil fuels. The fossil fuel industry itself has known since the 1970s that use of their products would lead to the climate crisis disasters we are seeing now. Researchers have found that Exxon's early climate models were an "[astonishingly accurate series of global warming projections](#)." Yet instead of changing their business model, Exxon and others in the fossil fuel industry chose to wage a decades-long campaign of deception based on the [tobacco industry model](#).

In 2023, the hottest year on record until 2024, oil and gas companies took in [\\$2.6 trillion](#) in profits, with five major oil companies (ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron, TotalEnergies, and BP) making [over \\$120 billion](#). U.S. oil and gas production is at records highs, while Mainers pay some of the highest prices ever for heating oil.

LD 1870 would shift the cost of climate disasters where it belongs: onto the fossil fuel industry that caused the problem in the first place. Under this law, the state would produce a detailed report about the financial impact of fossil-fuel climate pollution, then identify the largest emitters responsible and require them to

provide compensation in proportion to their share of emissions. These payments would be used to protect people and businesses in Maine from the devastating impacts of climate change.

[New scientific research](#) in the growing field of climate attribution concludes that it is indeed possible to identify which fossil fuel companies have caused the most climate damage. Dartmouth researchers found that 111 companies have caused [\\$28 trillion in climate damage](#) – almost equal to the gross domestic product of the entire United States. Of those, 10 companies – including Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell – are responsible for over half. Researchers calculated that every 1% of greenhouse gas emitted since 1990 has caused \$502 billion in damages from rising temperatures alone – not counting costs of extreme weather.

[Vermont](#) and [New York](#) have already passed Climate Superfund legislation, and it is being considered in at least a dozen other states. Maine should join these two trail-blazing states by putting the responsibility for cleaning up the state's climate-driven disasters where it belongs: on the industry that caused the problem.

LD 1870 is a common-sense measure to protect the people and environment of Maine, and we urge your committee to vote favorably on it as quickly as possible.

Cathy Becker
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LD 1870

Originally submitted on May 5. Resubmitting as I do not see this testimony on your website under this bill.