

Testimony in Support of LD 122, An Act to Authorize the Efficiency Maine Trust to Establish a Program to Support the Uptake of Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicles by Maine Businesses and to Establish a Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicle-to-grid Pilot Project

February 2, 2023

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ben Conniff and I am writing in support of LD 122, An Act to Authorize the Efficiency Maine Trust to Establish a Program to Support the Uptake of Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicles by Maine Businesses and to Establish a Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicle-to-grid Pilot Project

I am the co-founder and Chief Innovation Officer for Luke's Lobster, a third generation Maine seafood company. We are also a certified B corporation, a designation that enshrines our commitment to having a positive social and environmental impact. Luke's is a vertically integrated company, which means we work directly with fishermen at docks, as well as every other part of the supply chain from transportation, processing, and distribution to our own restaurants and to retailers. We have been working with multiple industry partners as well as the Island Institute to measure and reduce our carbon footprint and the carbon footprint of the broader lobster industry and marine economy. In 2022 we measured the carbon footprint of our entire supply chain from "bait to plate" and found that ground transportation accounted for nearly 10 percent of the emissions we created.

Luke's Lobster is not alone in the Maine business community in moving large amounts of product in heavy diesel trucks, emitting significant greenhouse gases in the process. Maine's natural resource economy has an opportunity to reduce its carbon footprint and in doing so improve its long-term viability by slowing the devastating effects of climate change.

"Maine Won't Wait" established ambitious emission-reduction goals, identifying the transition to electric vehicles as a key strategy for transforming the transportation sector, which currently contributes more than half of Maine's annual greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging the adoption of electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles through the creation of policies, incentives and pilot programs is a critical piece of achieving these goals.

The movement of live lobster between wharves and processors is a perfect example of where electric heavy-duty trucks could be used for routine business logistics while reducing dependence on fossil fuel. For example, the drive between one of the wharves we buy from in Tenants Harbor and our processing plant in Saco is roughly 100 miles, a distance that is well within the range of today's electric trucks. With chargers installed on both ends, an electric truck could be charged while loading at the dock and unloading at the plant without requiring any additional idle time. Transitioning away from diesel would reduce emissions and stabilize or improve day-to-day operating costs without any sacrifice to time or efficiency.

At Luke's Lobster, we have researched the options available for electric heavy-duty trucks and fast-charging infrastructure. We are ready to pilot this technology on a path to full adoption. However, the current cost is something that we simply cannot afford without financial support.

With the right incentives we could afford a pilot project for a truck and charging stations, and ultimately prove out an anticipated long-term savings on operating costs. Support for success stories will drive volume to the producers of electric trucks and help bring costs in line with diesel powered trucks. An injection of public-sector support is the lynchpin needed to drive transformation of trucking fleets that are so critical to Maine's economy.

This model is working for electric passenger cars, it will work for electric trucks, and we hope in the future we'll see similar legislation for electric fishing boats, where an even greater portion of our carbon footprint originates.

I strongly encourage you to establish a pilot project to for medium- and heavy-duty zero emission vehicles. Thank you for your time and consideration for this important strategy for climate action and business resilience.

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