

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Courtney Belolan, Director of Policy and Government

In Support of: L.D. 612

An Act to Create a Green Schools Coordinator in the Department of Education

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Marc Malon

Co-Sponsored by: Representatives Abdi, Brennan, Dodge, Jauch, LaRochelle, Murphy, and Rana and Senator Rafferty

March 9, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committees:

I am Courtney Belolan, Director of Policy & Government Affairs for the Department of Education and am here to speak in support of LD 612, An Act to Create a Green Schools Coordinator in the Department of Education. This bill creates the position of green schools coordinator within the Department of Education to assist department staff and other relevant stakeholders in establishing school facility priorities and working with school administrative units regarding building weatherization and modification for the use of renewable energy resources.

The Department's biennium budget includes three positions focused on green schools. Budget initiative reference number 1135 establishes one Public Service Executive II position who will serve as the Director of Green Schools. The Director of Green Schools will direct and oversee new and existing climate and green energy initiatives and coordinate those efforts across teams within the Department. Department projects will include construction, transportation, and connections to K-12 initiatives, in particular, engaging student voice in green initiatives. Areas of focus for this position will also include grant writing and coordination of green projects across departments and agencies. In the larger sense, this position will bring clarity and coordination to the support of green infrastructure in our schools by inspiring students, teachers, school administrators, parents and staff to make their schools and communities more sustainable. Budget initiative reference number 1150 provides funding for two contracted green building experts to support green construction and renovation in school buildings statewide. These two contracted positions will work under the Director of Green Schools and collaborate closely with the School Construction Team.

The Department will be available to provide additional information on LD 612 An Act to Create a Green Schools Coordinator in the Department of Education and respond to any questions at the work sessions on this bill.