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*Testimony of Rep. Scott Landry presenting*  
**LD 1363, An Act to Support Extraction of Common Minerals by Amending the Maine  
Metallic Mineral Mining Act**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Representative Scott Landry. I serve House District 75, which includes the towns of Chesterville and Farmington. Thank you for the opportunity to present **LD 1363, An Act to Support Extraction of Common Minerals by Amending the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act**.

In 2020, the Maine Climate Council got to work on the Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan which established ambitious goals for Maine's future including decreasing greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. Since then, we have made significant progress towards meeting those goals, progress that has resulted in more renewable energy generation and subsequently, a need for more battery storage capacity to help keep supply and rates stable and to maximize the potential of all of that energy.

Further, just last year the federal government unveiled the *American Battery Materials Initiative* which aims to secure a reliable and sustainable supply of critical minerals used for power, electricity, and electric vehicles. The U.S. does not currently produce enough of the critical minerals and battery materials, such as lithium, needed to power our clean energy technologies. Right now, China controls a significant amount of the critical mineral supply chain, but Maine is poised to take the lead on one key element of battery production – lithium mining.

Here in Maine, we are fortunate to have the largest lithium deposit in the world. But we also have some of the most prohibitive mining laws on the books. LD 1363 would amend Maine's Metallic Mining Act to allow for open-pit mining of lithium with certain important caveats.

Lithium is unlike most other metals which are typically bound up in sulfide. For those types of metals, like gold or silver, once you open up a deposit, exposing the sulfite to rain and other elements, it turns into extremely harmful sulfuric runoff. Mining the kind of lithium we have here in Maine does not have this problem, which makes the actual act of extracting the material much less dangerous. The lithium in the deposit in Newry is bound up in hard rock, meaning the

extraction process would be much more similar to a gravel pit or a granite quarry than typical metal mining.

Now, just because the extraction process is significantly less harmful than other metals doesn't mean there couldn't be other issues. That's why this bill proposes that mining of this kind only be allowed when other conditions are met. Specifically, it requires that open-pit mining only be allowable if the mine waste will not produce dangerous drainage issues or violate water quality standards. It further requires that any operation include a reclamation process which would involve retaining and stabilizing any topsoil that is disturbed during the mining process, reintroducing native vegetation wherever possible, returning intermittent and perennial streams that were diverted during the mining activity to the original channels, among other remediation measures.

By outlining very specifically what conditions must be met in order to allow for open-pit mining, LD 1363 would safely and responsibly permit the mining of lithium. We have to acknowledge that we need this resource, and we can do that while also being thoughtful and measured in our approach to extracting it. Not all mining is bad. The endorsement of this bill by the Natural Resources Council of Maine demonstrates how important this measure is for the wellbeing of Maine's natural resources, the climate and our collective futures. We have an unprecedented opportunity here, let's not squander it.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.