



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Lydia V. Crafts

4 Mills Rd. Box 13
Newcastle, ME 04553
Phone: (207) 593-2664

Lydia.Crafts@legislature.maine.gov

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***Testimony of Rep. Lydia Crafts introducing
LD 1495, Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study the Role of Critical Minerals as a
Resource in the State***

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Good Afternoon, Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. I am Representative Lydia Crafts and serve House District 46. I am here today to present LD 1495, *Resolve, Establishing a Commission to Study the Role of Critical Minerals as a Resource in the State*.

The known presence of and demand for critical minerals in the State of Maine has significantly shifted in the last five years. The hard work of this body in 2017 led to important protections in state mining laws. When considering mining proposals before us this session, I quickly realized there is an important role that recently discovered deposits play in supporting efforts to meet our nation and state's climate goals. While these proposals before us make immediate changes, the state would benefit from a long range plan in addressing mineral extraction related to our transition away from fossil fuels. Maine is leading the nation in setting and meeting our climate goals, but the electrification of our society requires continued access to critical minerals. The economic and environmental implications of changes to our mining laws are significant and deserve detailed attention and consideration. LD 1495 establishes a commission to study the role critical minerals play in our state's future.

In an effort to do this well, the commission of LD 1495 is tasked to address the following issues:

1. How other jurisdictions, including other states and countries, identify sites at which mining of critical minerals can be conducted safely to ensure long-term public safety if mining of critical minerals is permitted with appropriate safeguards;
2. The amount of critical mineral resources currently identified in the State;
3. The legal and ethical principles regarding the mining of critical minerals in the State;
4. The extent to which critical mineral resources will be needed in the State and the Nation in the future for household, government, business, commercial, security and other purposes;

5. The quality of currently available mining methods, including underground and open-pit mining, and processing methods and the need for measures to quantify the ability of companies that mine or process critical minerals.

Finally, LD 1495 is designed to compliment the current legislative proposals before this committee. The report back in December of 2023 will help guide our work moving forward and ensure that we pursue the economic development opportunities before us while mitigating current and historic risks associated with mining.

Thank you for providing me the time to speak and please let me know if I can answer any questions.