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TO: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Maine State Legislature

Testimony on LD 508, Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Review its Environmental Permitting Laws

I support LD 508, but I strongly suggest the Committee amend it because the Department of Environmental Protection has told me that:

“The Site Location of Development Act (Site Law) and the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) do not currently contain prohibitions or standards specific to global climate change, and an applicant for a permit pursuant to those laws is not required to make a showing of no impact to global climate.” (Email from Jami MacNeil, DEP, 02/09/2023)

LD 508 as written asks the DEP to study whether its permitting authority should “better consider climate change.” But in the above statement it’s clear the Department considers its authority to consider climate change is zero. It has approved projects under this assumption.

The world is in an enormous climate crisis. We can’t afford to wait until December to get an answer we already have. And then wait perhaps another year for a new law, if enacted, to take effect. You may wish to substitute this amendment below for LD 508 as written because “habitat connectivity, ecological resilience, and the coastal marine environment” are all considerations within global climate change.

1. The Department of Environmental Protection shall consider global climate change in its environmental permitting, including the Site Location of Development Act and the Natural Resources Protection Act.

2. The Department shall adopt rulemaking pursuant to this requirement as quickly as possible under the laws governing rulemaking.

3. The Department shall report to the Committee on its implementation of this permitting change by December 6, 2023.

A poll by *The Lancet* found that 75 percent of 10,000 young people worldwide feel the future is “frightening” and “Respondents rated governmental responses to climate change negatively and reported greater feelings of betrayal than of reassurance.”

Let’s help their future be less frightening. Let’s not betray them.