



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
From: Matt Cannon, State Conservation & Energy Director, Sierra Club Maine
Date: April 24, 2023
Re: **Testimony in support of LD 1411: An Act to Require the Adoption of Sector-specific Greenhouse Gas Emissions Limits**

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee, I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to support LD 1411.

Maine should feel proud about being a national leader in its current climate law, which requires a reduction in gross annual greenhouse gas emissions at least 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050¹. It created the Climate Council and the subsequent Climate Action Plan, moving us towards actionable policies in reducing emissions.

However, the law should be strengthened, as it currently doesn't require tangible metrics for the state to measure and demonstrate its success and ensure we are on track to meet our statutory emissions reduction goals. Currently, our overarching, economy-wide targets are helpful for facilitating state-wide efforts like the Climate Action Plan, but are too high level to effectively guide quantified metric development in specific sectors, like transportation and heating. Why would we not give our state all the tools it needs to ensure we meet our emissions targets? The climate crisis requires us to meet our targets and to focus on specific sectors that are the largest emitters. Additionally, setting sector specific targets helps businesses and industries plan.

The bill would strengthen the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) ability to ensure compliance with greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals by directing the DEP to promulgate and regularly update appropriate, sector-specific greenhouse gas emissions reduction limits on energy sources in each major sector and permit the adoption of limits on others.

If this bill is passed, agencies, industries, municipalities, utilities, businesses and citizens will have a better understanding of where carbon cuts need to come from, by who, and when. These would be based in part on the climate solutions developed by the Climate Council, enabling development of tangible metrics and policies targeting them. These sector-specific metrics and rules will also better enable the state to spread the burden of decarbonization across various industries.

¹ <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec576-A.html>

This bill limits not only CO2 but also the far more powerful gasses of methane, nitrous oxides and others. The bill should be clarified to cover black carbon or soot that settles on snow and ice and absorbs heat. Specifically, black soot also contributes to the arctic warming four times faster than the global average, melting the arctic ice faster, hastening sea level rise and interfering with the Gulf Stream, among other things.²

Though DEP is still responsible for setting sector specific limits, LD 1411 also specifically requires the Department of Transportation (MDOT) to reduce emissions from transportation, responsible for nearly half of Maine's CO2 emissions. The Climate Action Plan addresses transportation pollution through vehicle electrification in conjunction with strategies to reduce car and truck miles traveled and increasing public transportation. Yet, MDOT —the agency that manages and invests in all modes of transportation — has not been specifically obligated by the Legislature to orient its decision-making toward the state's climate benchmarks. LD 1411 would fix that. Because many of the state's necessary transportation policies fall outside of DEP's jurisdiction, a legislative directive to the MDOT is necessary.

We urge the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to support LD 1411. Maine needs all the tools possible to tackle climate change and ensure that we stay on track with our targets for reducing greenhouse gasses and adjust them in accordance with the best available scientific information. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I would be happy to answer questions or provide more information ahead of or at the work session.

Sincerely,
Matt Cannon
State Conservation & Energy Director
Sierra Club Maine

² <https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/slcp/bs/black-carbon>