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Testimony of Representative Vicki Doudera introducing
LD 1621, An Act Regarding Environmental Justice
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Good day Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Vicki Doudera and I represent House District 41, the towns of Camden and Rockport. I am before you today to introduce **LD 1621, An Act Regarding Environmental Justice**.

I am a cosponsor of this bill and was more than happy to pinch hit for Speaker Talbot Ross who is the lead sponsor. She sends her regards and apologies to the committee for her absence today but she also knows that I have been pretty passionate about this legislation. Let me take a moment to explain why and give a little background.

Two years ago I sponsored LD 1682, which charged the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to develop ways to incorporate equity considerations in decision making at the Department of Environmental Protection and the Public Utilities Commission and make recommendations to this committee in the second session of the 130th. That bill went before the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee and was signed into law. A series of public stakeholder meetings were held over the following fall, building on the work of the Maine Climate Council's Equity Subcommittee, and based on those meetings, recommendations were compiled and presented to this committee.

That report helped us generate LD 2018 in March of last year. That bill broadened the eligibility for intervenor funding for the Public Utility Commission, and directed the Board of Environmental Protection to update administrative and regulatory procedures through rulemaking at the Department of Environmental Protection to define environmental justice populations and to ensure that these communities are provided with fair and equitable access to the Department's decision-making processes. LD 2018 contained a fiscal note and – long story short – the section pertaining to administrative procedures at DEP was stripped and the bill was enacted solely with the Public Utilities Commission directives.

This bill simply restores that language and appropriation that was removed from this committee's report on LD 2018. I'm so thankful that Speaker Talbot Ross took up this mantle and I am happy to answer any questions.

Representative Vicki Doudera