



## Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Kelt Wilska, Energy Justice Manager, Maine Conservation Voters

Before the Transportation Committee

In Support of LD 1559

*An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding*

April 25, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Kelt Wilska and I am the Energy Justice Manager at Maine Conservation Voters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Maine's environment, democracy, and climate future. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 1559, An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding. This bill, a product of the GrowSmart Maine Policy Action 2023 process, reflects a broad consensus among the transportation policy community that bold action is needed to meet this moment in the fight for an equitable climate future.

Transportation is Maine's largest emissions sector, accounting for 49% of the state's annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. Our state has done a commendable job in outlining goals and strategies to reduce these emissions through *Maine Won't Wait*, the State's four-year plan for climate action, and the *Maine Clean Transportation Roadmap*. While the goal of "putting 41,000 light-duty electric vehicles on the road in Maine by 2025 and 219,000 by 2030"<sup>1</sup> is an important step towards emissions reductions, equally important is the goal of "reduc[ing] light-duty vehicle miles traveled over time, achieving 10% reductions by 2025 and 20% by 2030."<sup>2</sup> By reinvesting in our state's public transportation system, LD 1559 will put Maine firmly on the path to meeting this goal.

Among multiple critical funding provisions, this bill amends the Sensible Transportation Policy Act to reflect both a commitment to Maine's climate goals and a vision of an expanded public transportation system commensurate with the current needs of our state's residents. Public

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<sup>1</sup> "Maine Won't Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action" at 10, *Maine Climate Council* (Dec., 2020), [https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait\\_December2020\\_printable\\_12.1.20.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020_printable_12.1.20.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

transportation is the embodiment of an equitable transition to a clean and healthy future, reducing greenhouse gas emissions while also improving access to employment, vital services, and community resources for those who are unable to afford an electric car. LD1559 also improves access to the process of developing equitable transportation policy by expanding the representation of a strengthened Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) to include members of immigrant, labor, and youth communities.

LD 1559 represents a bold and necessary step towards a future in which Maine's citizens can enjoy safe and accessible public transportation to meet their daily needs while doing their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. Maine Conservation Voters urges you to vote "ought to pass." Thank you for your time.