

Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
Maine State Chamber of Commerce
In Support of L.D. 2261, An Act Designating New Motor Vehicle Emissions
Rules as Major Substantive Rules
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
March 20, 2024

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: I am Ashley Luszczki, and I am before you today on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, a statewide organization representing more than 5,000 Maine businesses.

The proposed Chapter 127-A: Advanced Clean Cars II rule before the Board of Environmental Protection is significant. The decision on this rule will shape the future of Maine's automotive landscape by mandating that 51 percent of vehicle sales in 2028 be zero-emission vehicles, escalating to 82 percent in 2032.

The Chamber recognizes that a shift to cleaner technologies is imperative to meet the state's climate goals and we are supportive of meeting these goals. However, we believe this decision requires careful consideration by the Legislature as it represents a change for manufacturers and, most significantly, Maine dealerships and consumers.

While electric vehicles have increased their overall composition of the new vehicle sales, according to an August 2023 Bangor Daily News article, electric vehicles only make up about six percent of new sales in Maine. Our dealerships are intimately familiar with their customers' vehicle preferences and financial realities. An abrupt change to vehicle regulations may be disruptive to dealerships seeking to find a balance between regulatory demands on manufacturers and their consumers' preference. This could ultimately lead to Mainers purchasing vehicles outside of the state leaving Maine businesses sitting with inventory on their lots that consumers are not interested in purchasing. For those reasons, we believe this decision-making should ultimately rest in the hands of the Legislature.

The decision to adopt this rule should not be taken lightly. Hundreds of comments were submitted to the BEP on this draft rule that would directly impact Maine businesses and consumers. Therefore, the Chamber urges this committee to support L.D. 2261 so that the decision on a rule with a magnitude such as this can be thoughtfully considered and voted on by the entire Legislature. Thank you for your consideration.