



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony in opposition to LD495, An Act to Require Rules Designed to Reduce Climate Change to Include Estimates of the Reduction in Adverse Climate Effects and of the Cost to Consumers

February 24, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Cathy Breen. I am speaking today as the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters, a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. And I'm speaking in opposition to the LD495, *An Act to Require Rules Designed to Reduce Climate Change to Include Estimates of the Reduction in Adverse Climate Effects and of the Cost to Consumers*.

This bill sets forth two new requirements for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to meet when adopting rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The first requirement - to estimate the reduction in adverse effects on the climate resulting from reducing greenhouse gas emissions - is not particularly problematic. In the decades that scientists have been tracking and studying climate change, they have provided ample evidence of the effects that greenhouse gas emissions cause in rising temperatures, more severe storm events, stronger winds, poor air quality (leading to increases in chronic respiratory illnesses), rising sea levels, and more.¹ In addition, it's not difficult to find a formula that will calculate the impacts of increasing or decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website has a calculator² that anyone on the internet can use. Moreover, Maine has already enacted a law to reduce by January 1,

¹ <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/climate/climate-change-impacts>

² <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>

2050, gross annual greenhouse gas emissions to at least 80% below the 1990 gross annual greenhouse gas emissions level.³

It's the second requirement of LD495 - to estimate the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions on the prices of gasoline, diesel fuel, electricity, heating oil and propane - that is impossible to meet. Electricity rates in Maine are determined by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and ISO New England, two entities that operate quite separately from DEP's Rulemaking proceedings. With respect to gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil and propane, these products all derive from crude oil, which is an international commodity whose price fluctuates according to market trends far outside the reach of the Maine DEP. I'm curious about why there is no mention of natural gas in this bill, even though prices for this fossil fuel commodity are similarly well beyond the purview of the Maine DEP. The other factor missing from this part of the bill is the cost of *not* reducing greenhouse gas emissions...why not require that calculation as well? For example, the severe storms that took place in Maine last winter left \$90,000,000 of damage to public infrastructure in Maine.⁴ And countless more millions in damage to private property.

In conclusion, the first part of the bill is unnecessary. And the second part of the bill is not achievable. As a result, I encourage you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD495. I thank you for your consideration, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

³ <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec576-A.html>

⁴ https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/2024-11/GOPIF_IRRC_2024_digital_111224.pdf p.10