

To: Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs, Maine State
Legislature

From: Jackson Chadwick, Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Date: Friday, April 25, 2025



RE: Testimony in Support of L.D. 1543: “An Act to Establish
the Maine Green Schools Network”

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs,

My name is Jackson Chadwick, and I am the Advocacy Director for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ). Our statewide organization of 500 youth advocates for bold climate policy and a sustainable future in Maine. We connect youth with the Maine State House via educational programming and events, including last week’s Youth Day of Action, which drew more than 150 students to Augusta.

On behalf of MYCJ, I am testifying today in strong support of L.D. 1543: “An Act to Establish the Maine Green Schools Network.” This is one of our priority bills this legislative session, and I am excited to share why we support it.

A Green School is energy efficient and reduces waste. It prioritizes interdisciplinary and place-based learning, emphasizes outdoor education, and helps students explore careers in the environmental field and the trades.

I grew up in midcoast Maine and attended Camden Hills Regional High School (Camden Hills) in Rockport. Camden Hills is a perfect example of a Green School. The campus features a solar system, a wind turbine, a garden center, and walking and running trails.

Attending an environmentally conscious high school that provided its students with opportunities to explore renewable energy, outdoor learning, and the trades equipped me with more knowledge of the place we call home. Since then, it has led me to MYCJ, working with the next generation of Maine youth on environmental policy.

However, not every school in Maine offers what Camden Hills can. Not every school has the ability or resources to provide students and educators with interactive outdoor education or pathways for skill development in the trades. That is why we need a Green Schools Network. Whether a school is urban or rural, coastal or inland, in Maine, each should be able to access the same benefits for their educators and students.



But what would that look like? This legislation authorizes the Department of Education to establish a grant program under the Green Schools Network to promote environmental education and initiatives in public schools. The Network will support professional development, energy efficiency, water conservation, outdoor learning, waste management, recycling programs, and more.

Therefore, I ask this committee to vote to pass L.D. 1543, which will benefit Maine's students, educators, environment, and future workforce. Establishing the Maine Green Schools Network is an investment in our students and in a brighter, more sustainable Maine, where youth can become the environmental stewards our state deserves.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jackson Chadwick
Advocacy Director
Maine Youth for Climate Justice