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*Testimony of Representative Grayson Lookner presenting*  
**LD 1808, An Act to Enact the Maine Climate Superfund Act**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and honorable colleagues on the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Grayson Lookner, and I represent House District 113, which includes several neighborhoods in Portland. I'm here today to present **LD 1808, An Act to Enact the Maine Climate Superfund Act**.

There's one basic rule we all learned as children: If you make a mess, you clean it up. Yet, for decades, fossil fuel companies have ignored this basic principle while making the greatest environmental mess in human history. They knew the dangers of their products and carbon emissions as early as the 1960s. Instead of taking responsibility, they funded multi-billion dollar disinformation campaigns to delay action and convince people it wasn't true. And now, as the consequences arrive at our doorstep, they want Maine taxpayers to foot the bill for the damage they caused.

The science is clear, the damage is mounting, and the time for action is now. LD 1808 represents our best opportunity to hold accountable those who caused this crisis while protecting the communities bearing its heaviest burdens.

The impacts are everywhere we look. In Saco, we've spent millions trying to save Camp Ellis from rising seas. In Hallowell, businesses are repeatedly flooded by an increasingly volatile Kennebec River. Across our state, power outages last longer, tick-borne diseases spread further, and invasive pests like the browntail moth thrive in our warming winters. Our ski seasons are shorter. Our lobster industry is threatened as the Gulf of Maine warms, driving one of our state's most precious resources north. Working waterfronts are being undermined on multiple fronts.

By 2050, Maine will see up to 1.7 feet of sea level rise – enough to drown coastal communities and reshape our shoreline forever. As Bill McKibben reminds us, "Physics is a very poor negotiating partner." These changes aren't hypothetical - they're happening now, and the costs are staggering.

But this crisis doesn't affect all Mainers equally. That's why LD 1808 specifically prioritizes environmental justice communities – those facing the worst impacts while having contributed least to the problem. In Washington County, fishermen watch their livelihoods disappear. In Portland's East

Bayside, rising waters mix with existing pollution. In Passamaquoddy and Wabanaki territory, traditional means of living off the land can't be sustained. In Lewiston's low-income neighborhoods, elderly residents suffer through unprecedented deadly heat waves without relief.

This legislation creates a Climate Superfund that finally makes polluters pay. It identifies companies like Exxon, Shell, and Chevron that extracted or refined fossil fuels between 2000-2024 and were responsible for over one billion metric tons of emissions. These corporate giants will pay their fair share into a fund that will support necessary programs across our state. These programs would range from coastal protection for vulnerable towns, flood resilience for repeatedly inundated communities, public health programs for heat-vulnerable populations, support for climate-threatened industries from lobstering to skiing, and infrastructure upgrades for our failing electrical grid.

Opponents of this bill will claim that such a program will raise energy prices. Let me dispel this myth: The truth is oil companies can't pass these costs to consumers because prices are set by global markets, not individual corporations. If Exxon tried to raise prices, drivers would simply buy from competitors. The reality is we're already paying for climate damage – through higher taxes, insurance premiums, and disaster recovery costs. This bill simply shifts those costs back to the polluters who caused the crisis. Remember, Exxon made \$70,000 per minute in profit last year – they can easily afford this without impacting prices, just by spending slightly less on stock buybacks and executive bonuses. Maine families shouldn't bear these costs when the companies that created this mess are raking in record profits.

Opponents will also claim these bills face legal challenges, but don't be fooled—these lawsuits are political theater, not serious legal arguments. The Federal administration's attacks on state climate accountability laws are a blatant attempt to intimidate states and protect the fossil fuel industry. Conservative legal experts have dismissed these challenges as unlikely to succeed, and courts—including the Supreme Court—have repeatedly rejected similar arguments. This isn't about the rule of law; it's about silencing states that dare to hold polluters accountable. In fact, the federal government is even suing states like Hawaii *before* they've filed their own cases—an outrageous overreach designed to scare others from taking action. But we can't let these scare tactics work. If anything, these desperate lawsuits prove one thing: Big Oil is afraid of accountability, and that's exactly why we must keep pushing forward.

The injustice is breathtaking. While these companies made \$200 billion in profits last year alone, Maine's working families pay through higher energy bills, property taxes, and insurance premiums. While executives collected bonuses for climate denial, our working communities and families face existential threats.

This is about more than policy – it's about justice. It's about recognizing that those who created this crisis must help solve it. It's about protecting what makes Maine special – our coastlines, our forests, our way of life.

The climate crisis is here. The question is who will pay to address it. I urge you to stand with Maine's communities and pass LD 1808. If you make a mess, you clean it up—no exceptions, no excuses.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.