



www.thirdact.org/maine

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am here today representing Third Act Maine, a statewide group of over 1,200 Maine elders committed to protecting our climate and democracy. Our members are represented in every county in Maine, with organizational hubs in Farmington, Waterville, Belfast, Damariscotta and Portland. Third Act was founded in 2021 by the environmentalist Bill McKibbin of Vermont; it has grown into a national community of Americans over the age of sixty working to change the world for the better by transitioning to a renewable energy economy.

This bill presents a common sense idea. Let's require the biggest wealthy oil companies to help pay for damages relating to the climate change they knowingly caused. Bills like ours have already passed in Vermont and New York. They are now being introduced in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey and Oregon—as well as here in Maine.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has documented the fact that emissions from fossil fuel companies have contributed significantly to global warming and sea-level rise. A recent study attributes almost half of the global temperature rise and a third of sea-level rise to these companies. In other words, **there is documented cause and effect between fossil fuel emissions and disasters caused by the accelerating changes to our climate**, and it can be attributed to the activity of specific companies over time.

In 2015 journalists discovered company memos proving that Exxon oil company has known since the late 1970s that the extraction, processing and use of its fossil fuel products would lead to global warming causing “dramatic environmental effects before the year 2050”. So the industry knew, they hid that knowledge and then, even worse, in the 1980s they began a multibillion dollar disinformation campaign to delay climate action by confusing the public and policymakers about the climate crisis, its causes, and its solutions. Some of you may remember gems like “Oil pumps life” and “Who told you the earth was warming, Chicken Little?” The goal was to convince the public that the climate crisis is not real, not caused by humans, not serious and not solvable despite the fact that they know otherwise. Then in 2021 six top oil executives were summoned

to US Congress to answer for the industry's history of discrediting climate science – and they all lied under oath about it.* This legislation doesn't seek to hold these companies accountable for their lies, but it does hold them accountable for the damage they've caused to Maine.

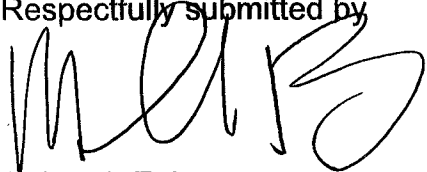
Meanwhile their annual revenue is massive, exceeding trillions of dollars annually. In 2023, the global oil and gas industry earned over \$2.6 trillion. The U.S. oil and gas industry alone generated \$244.4 billion in revenue that same year. **These wealthy companies can afford to help clean up their messes - Maine cities, towns, townships and taxpayers cannot.**

As elders, Third Actors remember the Superfund Bill from the 1980s. It required the chemical and petroleum industries to pay into a fund under the EPA to be used to clean up environmental damage they caused. It has been very effective in cleaning up the environment and this law will be too.

Climate change is real and all evidence indicates that it's accelerating. We in Third Act Maine hope that if we start holding the fossil fuel industry accountable, we can mitigate damages for future generations. Since the federal government is not going to do this anytime soon, **it's up to us and there's no time to waste.**

On behalf of Third Act Maine, I ask you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1870.

Respectfully submitted by



Deborah Fahy
Third Act Maine

* "The forgotten oil ads that told us climate change was nothing" By Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes in The Guardian, November 18, 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/18/the-forgotten-oil-ads-that-told-us-climate-change-was-nothing>