



Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

May 6, 2025

RE: LD 1868, An Act to Advance a Clean Energy Economy by Updating Renewable and Clean Resource Procurement Laws

Dear Chair Lawrence, Chair Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation nonprofit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1868, *An Act to Advance a Clean Energy Economy by Updating Renewable and Clean Resource Procurement Laws*.

Maine's rich and diverse wildlife—our native Brook Trout, nesting songbirds, forest mammals, coastal wading birds, and marine life—depend on the stability and integrity of the natural landscapes we all share. Yet climate change, fueled by fossil fuel combustion, is rapidly degrading those landscapes. Rising temperatures, erratic precipitation patterns, and increasingly destructive storms are dramatically altering ecosystems and destroying habitats. Floods have submerged nesting grounds. Droughts and warming waters threaten coldwater fisheries. Sea-level rise is shrinking coastal marshes vital to migratory birds.

Burning fossil fuels is the leading cause of this disruption, and Maine remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels to heat our homes, power our vehicles, and generate electricity. This dependence not only drives climate instability, but also exposes Maine families and businesses to high and volatile energy costs. Mainers spend more than \$4 billion every year on imported oil and gas,¹ money that leaves our state instead of building a resilient, homegrown clean energy economy.

LD 1868 offers a better path forward. Reaching 100% clean electricity by 2040 will stabilize energy costs, improve public health, and protect our most vulnerable ecosystems from further climate harm. According to Maine's 2040 Pathways analysis, this transition could save the average household roughly \$1,300 a year on energy bills, while also fostering thousands of good-paying clean energy jobs right here

¹ Maine Energy Plan (Jan 2025)

<https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov/energy/files/2025-01/Maine%20Energy%20Plan%20January%202025.pdf>



in Maine. These are jobs that build solar panels, maintain wind farms, weatherize homes, and restore working landscapes, all of which benefit both people and wildlife.

Already, Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard has spurred more than a billion dollars in clean energy investment and created more than 1,000 new jobs. With more than 15,000 Mainers currently employed in clean energy, the sector is poised to grow even further under this legislation, especially in rural and coastal communities that have often been left behind.

From a wildlife conservation perspective, clean energy is also a habitat protection strategy. Responsible siting and development of renewable energy infrastructure, especially when paired with smart planning, helps conserve the forests, wetlands, and waterways that Maine's iconic species rely on. By reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and curbing emissions, LD 1868 also helps us avoid the worst effects of climate change, meaning fewer climate-induced disasters that wipe out habitats or displace species.

As an organization committed to the stewardship of Maine's natural legacy, we urge the Committee to support LD 1868. Clean energy is an environmental necessity and an economic opportunity. With thoughtful leadership, Maine can lead the region by example, investing in a clean energy future that strengthens our communities, saves ratepayers money, and safeguard the wild places and wildlife that make our state truly special.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maine's environment and clean energy future.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate