



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Legislative Director, Maine Conservation Voters
In Support of LD 2037 *"An Act to Update the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Allowances"*

Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
January 21, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury and I'm the new Legislative Director at Maine Conservation Voters. MCV is a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here to testify in support of LD 2037 "An Act to Update the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Allowances".

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, is an eastern states regional cooperative to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions within each participating state. There is a model rule that each state uses to design and implement their own program so not every state program is the same. LD 2037 will update the provisions governing RGGI in Maine.

The RGGI program benefits both the environment and Maine's economy. Polluting power plants are required to pay for the pollution they create and that money is invested back in Maine communities. States participating in RGGI have seen a 46% reduction in CO2 emissions. This helps protect our climate and environment as increased carbon emissions impact climate change and lead to increased heatwaves and damaging storms. Additionally, lower carbon emissions can also protect public health as poor air quality can lead to increased instances of asthma, lung cancer and cardiovascular issues. One of the changes in this bill eliminates the offset program, which is good for the communities surrounding the polluting entities. Previously, companies could, for example, plant trees in a different location to offset pollution that was coming from one of their factories. This was only benefitting the polluters as the offset programs were not generally in the same area as the pollution was happening so the communities around the facility were still dealing with the impacts.

Money paid into the RGGI program by polluters benefits Mainers. Between 2009 and 2024, Maine received more than \$246 million in funding as a RGGI participant. This money was invested back into the communities, with a significant portion going towards working families struggling with rising energy costs. In Fiscal Year 2024, about \$12.6 million went to Efficiency Maine's low-income initiatives, including heat pump and weatherization programs designed to lower energy bills.

If we want to continue to benefit from the RGGI program, the legislature must pass LD 2037. Pulling out of the program would mean that Maine would get none of the benefits and would still be on the hook for the small incremental price increases passed along by emitters in states still participating in RGGI. While pulling out of the program may seem like it would lead to savings, it's like pulling money out of your retirement, it helps in the short term but not in the long term.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2037.

Thank you