



To: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Audrey Hufnagel, Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Date: January 25, 2021

Re: Testimony in support of LD 1902: Resolve, To Establish a Pilot Program To Encourage Climate Education in Maine Public Schools

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Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Audrey Hufnagel and I proudly write as a representative for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 300 youth and 20 youth-led groups from across the state who are fighting for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. I am writing in support of LD 1902: Resolve, To Establish a Pilot Program To Encourage Climate Education in Maine Public Schools.

The climate crisis will affect the futures of current young people and generations to come. Because of this, young people need to understand the impacts of the climate crisis so that they can take action now, and know how to deal with it in the future. This cannot happen without climate education in Maine schools. Many students in the state are lacking proper climate education, so they don't understand the severity of the climate crisis and the impact it will have on their future and don't know how to take action.

In addition to the need for young people to take action on the climate crisis, the state needs young people who are interested in careers in industries such as environmental science, renewable energy, and agriculture that are necessary for expanding Maine's green economy and dealing with climate change. Having climate education in schools will make students aware of these career paths and give them the knowledge and inspiration to pursue them.

LD 1902 would provide interdisciplinary climate education. Climate change will affect every aspect of our lives, so it should be taught in every subject. This will further help prepare students to deal with the climate crisis in the future.

Additionally, LD 1902 would help implement the climate education recommendations outlined in the Maine Won't Wait climate action plan and help provide educators with the necessary support to teach the next generation science standards. Many educators have pointed to the lack of professional development as a barrier to implementing these standards and teaching climate education in general.

LD 1902 focuses on providing the funds for professional development around teaching climate education. It is not a mandate for climate education. Instead, it focuses on providing much-needed support for educators. The need for this support has become even clearer as the pandemic puts strain on schools and teachers. LD 1902 would also pave the way for further support for schools to teach climate education, because schools with developed climate education programs will be in a better position to receive federal funds and other grants.

With this support, educators will be able to teach climate education to students so that they can understand the impacts of the climate crisis and what they can do about it. Because of this, LD 1902 is a crucial investment in the future of Maine. For the above reasons, our coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, urges you to vote ought-to-pass on LD 1902.