



To: Committee On Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Ezra Sassaman, Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Date: January 31, 2023

Re: Testimony in favor of LD LD 142: An Act to Fund Climate-related Service Work.

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee On Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I am writing as a representative for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 450 youth from across the state who fight for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. I am writing in favor of LD 142: An Act to Fund Climate-related Service Work.

Maine Youth for Climate Justice understands the climate crisis is a problem stretching across multiple disciplines and sectors. We recognize that a challenge of this magnitude and scale must include large-scale, top-down solutions guided by climate scientists and must also have small-scale, bottom-up solutions taking places in communities across the state. We also recognize the climate crisis has a disproportionate impact on historically marginalized, low-income, and/or youth Mainers.

The Maine Climate Corps represents an important grassroots, community-level solution to the climate crisis that acknowledges these disparities. We support this program's recognition that the climate crisis hits some communities especially hard and its resolve to ensure Corps volunteers represent the economic and demographic diversity of Maine's communities.

Additionally, in such a rural state, we support the Maine Climate Corps as a way to connect otherwise isolated youth interested in tackling the climate crisis, the greatest shared challenge we and future generations face.

For the above reasons, our coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, urges you to support LD 142. Thank you.