



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Mandy Ball, Sierra Club Maine

Date: March 15, 2021

Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 226: An Act To Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons To Fight Climate Change**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Mandy Ball, and I write as a representative of Sierra Club Maine's over 20,000 members and supporters. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we defend everyone's right to a healthy world. We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 226.

I moved to Maine 35 years ago to enjoy the outdoors, the environment, and the people it has engendered. Maine is home. I travel for family and work. When I'm away, I sorely miss the quiet, the beauty, the birds and butterflies, the woods, the night sky, the space, the smells. I really want to make sure I can always come home to the Maine I love. We need to protect our climate, so we can protect our environment, our home.

In Maine, our quality of life, as well as many of our businesses and our very economy, is dependent on the climate. Environmental degradation due to stratospheric ozone loss is more than a long-term disaster scenario with climate change. It's a problem now! It costs money and jobs here in Maine in the fishing and tourist industries. Our woods and waters are changing, warming up. Cool loving Moose and Lobsters are moving farther north. Trees are suffering from new diseases. Ticks are getting worse. Our own health is being affected, not only indirectly due to the changes in our environment, but directly as the ozone layer is depleted. We can expect to see an increased incidence of skin cancer and cataracts. The Act To Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons To Fight Climate Change would help reduce the devastation of the ozone layer, protecting our environment and our health.

"With air conditioning becoming more commonplace, HFC use has risen sharply over the past decade." * As the climate warms, more of us are installing air conditioners. In the past, you could sleep through the few unpleasant nights we had here in Maine, but these past irregularities are the new normal. Because of the climate crisis, our Maine is becoming hotter and more humid." Last summer, we had 13 days that reached

90 degrees, or higher, according to the National Weather Service's climatological report for June to August. Nights didn't cool as much as usual either.** Like many other Mainers, we installed an air conditioner.

HFCs are a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. According to the EPA government website, it is thousands of times more potent per pound than carbon dioxide.*** It is a definite improvement over the banned HCFCs, which the HFCs replaced. But now, there are even better, more climate friendly alternatives.

Spray foam and building insulation using HFCs should be transitioned to HFOs because the use of HFCs in building insulation actually can negate the reduction in emissions that would result in lower fuel consumption. The EPA recommends transitioning to HFOs as they have a much lower impact on the climate, lower flammability, and lower GWP (Global Warming Potential).****

“The [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) estimates that global HFC consumption in building and construction foams globally accounted for about 38 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent in 2010. Certainly, transitioning to low-GWP foam products is an essential part of the green building transition. To support this, some building certification programs, like Passive House, have [banned](#) the use of HFC containing spray foam products”

Since the HFCs are so much more potent than carbon dioxide, reducing or banning them would make a much-needed dent in the greenhouse gases emitted. This is a necessary step, it's cost effective, and we can make an impact on climate change right now by passing this bill. Help protect our ozone layer, so it can protect us.

Sierra Club Maine urges you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 226: An Act To Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons To Fight Climate Change.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Ball
Legislative Team Volunteer

*www.envirotech-online.com/news/air-monitoring/6/breaking-news/what-are-hydrofluorocarbons-and-why-are-they-banned/40673

**Portland Press Herald: Posted September 4, 2020

***www.epa.gov/snap/reducing-hydrofluorocarbon 2016

***https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/transitioning_to_low-gwp_alternatives_in_building_and_construction_foams.pdf

Becky Bartovics

I am submitting this testimony for a member of the Sierra Club Maine Legislative Team. Sierra Club Maine strongly supports LD 226.