



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

By David Costello, Climate & Clean Energy Program Director

March 15 , 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is David Costello. I am the Climate and Clean Energy Program Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), and I am testifying today in support of LD 226, An Act to Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons to Fight Climate Change.

Eliminating Potent Short-lived Greenhouse Gases Key to Confronting Climate Change

To reduce the most severe health, economic, and environmental impacts of climate change, the world must cut greenhouse gas emissions by almost half by 2030. That's the position of the overwhelming majority of climate scientists, health professionals, and economists, including those at the University of Maine. Achieving what science and sound economics require will not be easy, however, and will demand an all-in, all greenhouse gases approach. Importantly, while carbon dioxide (CO₂) is by far the most abundant and damaging greenhouse gas, it is not the most potent. The most powerful greenhouse gases from a global warming standpoint are Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)

HFCs are a group of industrial chemicals primarily used for cooling and refrigeration. They were developed to replace more immediately detrimental ozone-depleting substances, which, of course, is a good thing. However, HFCs have global warming impacts that are hundreds, and some cases thousands, of times greater than carbon dioxide. And while they currently comprise only 1% of our greenhouse gas problem and are comparatively short-lived, their usage is increasing and will contribute significantly to the Earth's warming if they are not eliminated by the middle of this century.

LD 226 Will Phase Out HFCs Utilization and Consumption in Maine

LD 226 will aid in phasing out the consumption of HFCs in Maine by effectively prohibiting the sale, lease, installation, and use of most of the products and equipment that use hydrofluorocarbons in the state. The bill will accomplish this by directing the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to regulate HFC usage in Maine. It is important to note that the new regulations are not likely to be overly burdensome to Maine businesses and consumers because HFC alternatives are already readily available.

Addressing Potential Health and Environmental Concern

Additionally, to ensure that potential HFC substitutes do not cause other problems, NRCM supports the addition of language that would require the DEP to properly vet any HFC alternatives to ensure there are no negative public health or environmental impacts.

For these reasons, NRCM strongly supports this bill as a cost-effective way of reducing the use of a potent class of greenhouse gases and helping address the harmful impacts of climate change. Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any questions you may have.