

Testimony of Representative Ralph Tucker Introducing: LD 226 An Act to Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons to Fight Climate Change

March 15, 2021

Good morning Senator Brenner and fellow members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee.

This proposal was originally submitted by the Governor in the 129th legislature, as LD 2112. There were many tweaks and changes in response to concerns of environmental advocates, manufacturers, trade associations, Maine farmers and restaurant owners. The bill was voted unanimously “Ought to Pass” by this committee last Spring, just before the 129th legislature adjourned.

This year the proposal is back as a DEP agency bill, which I have been honored to present to this committee. The language I ask you to consider is the amended text I had posted on this ENR hearing site, which is roughly the same text voted on last Spring. Not the original text listed as LD 226.

You will learn that hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) molecules are a highly potent contributor to warming of the

atmosphere, 100 to 1,000 times as potent as CO₂, pound per pound.

You will learn that HFCs are used in refrigeration, aerosol propellants and blowing agents for insulation panels and products.

You will also learn that HFC alternatives are technologically available, and that there is a major international and national consensus, even among manufacturers of refrigeration equipment, to reduce the use and release of HFCs into the air.

In this effort to reduce HFCs, Maine is not out front or ahead of other countries and states. We are not the guinea pig. This bill is part of a long and sustained effort by states, manufacturers and trade associations, across the globe and the country, moving in the same direction.

One major concern should be addressed at the onset.

Maine's farmers, restaurants and retailers will not have to give up their current refrigeration equipment. Maine contractors will not have to give up their supply of wallboard insulation. The use of current equipment and products using HCF are grandfathered.

The bans and prohibitions in this effort are not aimed at end users, but apply to the manufacture and sale of specific HFC-connected equipment and products in the future. Meanwhile, new types of equipment and products are coming on the market as replacements during a transition period.

Some argue that we can depend on technology and the profit motive to solve all our climate concerns. I don't agree with this approach, as it is sometimes an excuse for doing nothing. However, with HFCs the danger is so obvious that the industry has come around to trying to own the solution, and is cooperating with governments at the international, national and state levels to make the transition away from HFCs as painless as possible for the American public. In this case, innovation will be a big help, and may even give American industry a leg up internationally.

In our response to global warming, the reduction of HFCs is low hanging fruit. We will get a significant impact at comparatively low cost with these HFC reductions.

Thank you.