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South Portland, Maine 04106 | April 27, 2021

Written Testimony in Favor of LD 1532 – “An Act to Protect Maine’s Air Quality by
Strengthening Air Emission Licensing”

Senator Brenner and Representative Tucker and esteemed member of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, We write today in our personal capacities to strongly urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1532 – “An Act to Protect Maine’s Air Quality by Strengthening Requirements for Air Emissions Licensing” as amended.

In 2017, our family was shocked to learn of the consent decrees entered between the federal EPA and Global Partners regarding the company’s emissions far above the limits permitted by EPA and DEP from its Tank farm located a 10th of a mile from our home. In 2020, we were again dismayed to learn that another similar facility owned by Sprague’s (within a mile of our home) also exceeded its EPA and DEP emission limits. These companies had regularly exceeded their emission limits for years.

It is extremely concerning to our family that these facilities cannot even comply with their existing permits. However, it is also deeply concerning that the standards by which industrial facilities and tank farms, have licensing emission standards do not adequately take into account the residential context and instead are based on (at best) workplace exposure models.

Our home is a tenth of a mile from Global’s fence line. I am surrounded by both single-family homes and multi-unit apartment buildings. Closest to Global’s facilities are dozens of families with small children. These kids play together outside every day– taking advantage of the fact that our neighborhood does not include through streets. Global facility is also within a mile of three schools and three daycare facilities. Global operates within this residential rather than a commercial context. If you look across Maine, South Portland is not alone. Communities across the state sit alongside industrial facilities with the potential to emit large quantities of toxic compounds.

Through our own community’s experience, we have learned that one problem of the current licensing is that at best it only considers workplace exposure levels. This is a complete mismatch with the location of industrial facilities such as these. Instead, licensing for these facilities should adequately take into account their residential context. The failure of air emissions licensing to take into account the context in which a facility is located is an oversight of Maine’s regulatory scheme.

We support LD 1532 as amended because among other things, it fixes this oversight. By requiring DEP to utilize the Human Exposure Model for air emission licensing of facilities located within residential communities, the bill serves to better align permitting with the residential context in which most facilities sit.

We urge you to vote “ought to pass as amended” as Maine families cannot wait another session for emission limits that keep us safe from the long-term harmful effects of industrial emissions.