



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of
LD 1532: An Act To Protect Maine's Air Quality by Strengthening Requirements for Air Emissions
Licensing**

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross State Office Building
Monday, May 3, 2021

Good morning Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Ed Miller. I am a resident of Hallowell, retired public health professional and treasurer of Maine Public Health Association. MPHA supports Representative Morales' amendment to her bill, LD 1532: "An Act To Protect Maine's Air Quality by Strengthening Requirements for Air Emissions Licensing."

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 500 individual members and 30 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities – but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities and we take that responsibility seriously.

This amendment modifies the bill in several key ways, all of which have positive implications for protecting public health:

1. It directs Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Human Exposure Model (HEM3/HEM4), which is a tool that estimates the potential human health impacts from an individual facility and from cumulative impacts. Currently, Maine DEP does not consider the combined collective impacts of multiple emitting facilities near neighborhoods.
2. It requires consideration of proximity of homes when issuing permits as well as setting emissions limits that restrict the potential for additional cancers to 1 in 100,000 people.
3. It requires continuous ambient air monitoring at the fenceline using EPA's AP325 or other EPA-approved method.
4. If the facility is out of compliance with the permit limits set by the human health-based EPA-approved model, then the facility shall install control technology to lower emissions to the permitted level, and demonstrate, with continuous fenceline monitoring at the property limit, that they are not causing an exceedance of the ambient air guidelines established by Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Research shows our zip code is a stronger predictor of our health status than our genetic code. In 2013, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation published a report exploring this finding.¹ Air pollution, including ozone and particulate matter, can increase risk for asthma and other respiratory illnesses – and can aggravate symptoms for those who already have respiratory health challenges. According to the [American Lung Association's State of the Air Report](#) (2020), thousands of Mainers live in parts of the state where air quality is poor enough to cause both acute and chronic health problems. The Report also showed 18,474 Maine children and 133,151 adults have asthma. Like many public health challenges, we see disparities in the burden of respiratory health problems, like those associated with poor air quality – such that there is a greater prevalence of disease among rural, low-income and minority populations.

This legislation will positively impact the air quality and health of Maine communities. We respectfully request you vote LD 1532 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you for your consideration.

¹RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America. Improving the health of all Americans by focusing on communities. *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*. 2013. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2013/06/improving-the-health-of-all-americans-by-focusing-on-communities.html>.