



**Testimony of Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director
Appalachian Mountain Club**

**In opposition to LD 1498 An Act to Prevent Increased Heating Fuel, Natural gas, Gasoline and Diesel
Fuel Pricing in Maine By Prohibiting Adoption of Rules Limiting Greenhouse Gas Emissions
May 3, 2021**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resources committee, I am Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Founded in 1876, AMC is the nation's oldest conservation, recreation, and education organization, with the mission to foster the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors. We have 6,500 members in Maine, and own 75,000 acres of forestland in the 100-Mile Wilderness region of Piscataquis County, managed for multiple use including sustainable forestry, carbon sequestration, backcountry recreation, and environmental education. We oppose LD 1498.

The evidence is clear: climate change is already negatively impacting Maine, from the warming Gulf of Maine, to extensive drought, to increased forest fires, all with serious and expensive consequences. AMC's Research Office collaborates with scientists around the northeast, and has found that in the last 100 years, winters in the region have become significantly shorter, warmer, and with less snow cover. Each of us has experienced the dramatic shifts in temperature, known as "winter whiplash" which cause property and crop damage. More frequent flooding threatens our public infrastructure. We must act.

The largest source of carbon pollution in Maine is transportation, and the second largest is residential energy use. If we are to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change for our children and grandchildren, including negative impacts on human health, food systems, and the economy, we must take responsibility by reducing greenhouse gas emissions now. That's why the Appalachian Mountain Club strongly supports the adoption of the Transportation Climate Initiative. Pricing can be a powerful incentive to change consumer habits as we move to cleaner sources of energy.

LD 1498 would delay much-needed action to reduce carbon pollution by a year. Such a delay would be irresponsible in the face of catastrophe. Likewise, further debating the rules that the legislature directed two years ago that the Department of Environmental Protection, Board of Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation adopt is unnecessary and redundant.

Finally, with regard to the prioritization of sequestration to offset Maine-generated emissions: earth's atmosphere is warming as a result of carbon pollution and the loss of trees and other plants that absorb it. The situation is analogous to a boat with a leak—if the boat is sinking, the location of the leak is not especially relevant. While we can prioritize carbon sequestration that offsets Maine's emissions, we need to do so much more than that to prevent dire impacts to our planet and its inhabitants. We should recognize that Maine's 17.5 million acres of forests provide sequestration that is both ecologically and economically valuable.

We ask you to vote LD 1498 Ought Not to Pass.