



Testimony before the

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

By Rob Wood, Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy

May 3, 2021

Re: 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

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Rob Wood and I am the Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to testify **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.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. Working in more than 70 countries, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. The Nature Conservancy has been working in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 275,000 acres. We work across the state to restore the rivers and streams that support healthy fish populations, partner with fishermen to rebuild groundfish populations to benefit coastal communities across the Gulf of Maine, and develop innovative solutions to address the causes and impacts of climate change.

The State of Maine has made tremendous progress addressing climate change over the past two years. Thanks to the work of this Committee and strong bipartisan support for the Governor's 2019 climate bill, LD 1679, the State enacted science-based greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and developed a consensus-based Climate Action Plan to achieve those targets. The Climate Action Plan was approved by the wide-ranging membership of the Maine Climate Council in December with substantial input from citizens across the State, and it is now moving into the implementation phase.

The Nature Conservancy's concern with LD 1498 is that it will delay action on climate change, at just the moment when the State is poised to beginning to move forward on its comprehensive plan, and at a time when action is needed most. The Legislature tasked the DEP with rulemaking to update its tracking and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and to begin working toward compliance with the emissions levels established by the Legislature, in a manner consistent with the Climate Action Plan. LD 1498 would delay this rulemaking process, which is already underway, by a full year, and would require additional legislative approval for any newly proposed rules.

The routine technical rulemaking that is current underway at the DEP includes significant opportunity for additional public input. In 2019, the Legislature also passed LD 1789, which requires the Board of Environmental Protection to approve newly proposed rules. Any new rules will go through a public hearing process—a hearing has already been scheduled for the greenhouse gas tracking and reporting rules—and ultimately to the Board for consideration and a final decision.

We believe the Committee should stay the course on the climate change law it developed in 2019, and vote ought not to pass on LD 1498. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.