

Testimony of Ben Lucas for
The Maine State Chamber of Commerce

In OPPOSITION to LD 1429: “Act To Achieve Carbon Neutrality in Maine by the Year 2045”

January 24th, 2022

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Ben Lucas, I live in Portland, and I am submitting these comments today on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is a statewide business organization made up of both large and small businesses with over 5,000 members companies. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is submitting this letter in opposition to the proposed amendment of LD 1429.

The Chamber is submitting these comments in opposition for three reasons. First, procedurally speaking, we object to the fact that this amendment completely changes the whole language of the bill and even replaces the title of the bill without having a public hearing and going right to work session. While in original form, LD 1429 was a large piece of legislation with several moving parts, the aim of the bill was to accept time-sensitive recommendations of the Maine Climate Council. The amendment to LD 1429, An Act To Achieve Carbon Neutrality in Maine by 2045 was not even mentioned as one of the recommendations in the original form of the bill. If there had been a public hearing, the Chamber would’ve raised the following two points for clarification.

The first being DEP recently changed rules around biomass reporting in Maine and it requires DEP to report net emissions. The inclusion of net emissions requires the DEP to now consider both sequestration as well as biogenic emissions, including the combustion of biomass. Please see [Chapter 167](#) which outlines how biogenic emissions are to be included in the greenhouse gas inventory, and [Chapter 168](#) which outlines that emissions are included in the gross emissions totals.

Given this DEP rule, it will make it incredibly difficult for Maine to reach the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2045. Biomass is already built and if it isn’t considered to be carbon neutral as it was previously, this means we will need to even more renewable energy to come onto the grid quickly. This will mean increased costs and potential delay of reaching the goals set forward in the Maine Climate Action Plan of 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 80% by 2050. We should not be passing legislation that we know will be incredibly difficult to comply with and implement regulations that will have a negative impact on Maine’s businesses efforts to reach the climate goals.

And the last question we would raise, is how this is going to be different from the executive order that Governor Mills signed in 2019? With the Governor signing the executive order, this is already happening, and information is being reported to DEP.

To conclude, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce has been a proud member and supportive of the Maine Climate Council serving on several working groups. We are supportive of many aspects of the Maine Climate Council and will continue to be engaged with the work of the council. Maine businesses stand ready to adapt to challenges that climate change presents. Maine businesses are committed to finding ways to shrink our carbon footprint and we support the goals aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, LD 1429 is not one that will help accomplish these goals and creates public policy that is not achievable and adds regulation that will be incredibly difficult for Maine businesses to comply with.

Thank you for allowing me to provide these written comments. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or any additional information you may need. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce would respectfully ask the committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1429.

Ben Lucas
Government Relations Specialist
Maine State Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 207-441-9333
Email: blucas@mainechamber.org