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***Testimony of Sen. Eloise Vitelli supporting
LD 1429, An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of
the Maine Climate Council
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
May 17, 2021***

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Eloise Vitelli, and I represent Senate District 23, which includes all of Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1429, “An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of the Maine Climate Council.”

The good work done by the Climate Council gives all of us, specifically us legislators, concrete action steps to take to decrease Maine’s greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change. The recommendations contained in the Maine Won’t Wait report cover a lot of ground. The fact is, if we want to reach the goals we’ve set for ourselves to make sure Maine can continue to be the beautiful and healthy place we know and love, we’ll have to act fast to get the ball rolling on some of these important changes. LD 1429 is designed to do just that.

Several of the measures contained in this bill align with my legislative priorities this session. For example, my bill LD 636 aims to expand the amount of local food served in Maine schools, and to broaden the Local Produce Fund to contain local meat and other sources of protein. Another of my bills, LD 1579, sets goals for electrifying state fleets to cut down on greenhouse gases emitted by the transportation sector, and mandates the construction of a roadmap to get us there. While I believe these bills are important pieces of the puzzle, they must be complemented by other legislation.

I appreciate Rep. Dunphy’s bringing this bill forward as a vehicle to implement these recommendations. Combating the very real threat climate changes poses to our economy, our health, Maine’s natural beauty and our fragile ecosystems is going to take hard work and commitment from all of us. But, if thoughtfully implemented, these necessary changes can improve life for all Mainers in the short- and long-term.

Thank you to the committee for taking on this hefty bill, and for fighting to protect Maine’s environment and natural resources. I’m happy to help however I can in finding workable solutions to these pressing challenges.