



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of
LD 71: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 171: Control of Petroleum Storage Facilities, a
Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection**

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross State Office Building
Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Good morning, Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, 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, including serving as CEO of the American Lung Association in Maine for more than 20 years, and current board member of Maine Public Health Association (MPHA). MPHA supports LD 71: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 171: Control of Petroleum Storage Facilities, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 700 individual members and 60 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 resolve provides for legislative review of Chapter 171: Control of Petroleum Storage Facilities, a major substantive rule of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. MPHA is supportive of the provisions in this proposed rule, including new requirements for fence-line monitoring, continuous measurement of actual emissions from heated petroleum storage tanks, and reporting.

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](#) (2022), 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 19,797 Maine children and 116,217 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 low-income and minority populations. In South Portland, the neighborhoods adjacent to the tank farms are at greater risk for poor air quality than neighborhoods further from the farms given their proximity to the emissions. These proposed changes will provide needed information for determining if the ambient air in those adjacent neighborhoods is safe to breathe.

This legislation will positively impact the air quality and health of Maine communities. We respectfully request you vote LD 71 “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>.