

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)

Regarding L.D. 1621: An Act Regarding Environmental Justice

Sponsor: Representative Rachel Talbot Ross

Public Hearing: Monday, April 24 at 1:00pm

Dear Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I am the Advocacy Manager with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a statewide network of almost 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities. MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard.

One of the issues that has impacted immigrant communities most over the years is Environmental Justice. Study after study has shown that immigrants are disproportionately impacted by staying in unsafe homes (with leadⁱ, asbestosⁱⁱ, etc.), living in unsafe areas (due to pollutionⁱⁱⁱ, flood zones^{iv}, etc.), and working in unsafe conditions (with chemical exposures^v, extreme temperatures^{vi}, etc.).

We would like to see legislation that defines phrases such as Environmental Benefits, Environmental Burdens, and Environmental Justice Principles. Indeed, we would like to see the establishment of an Environmental Justice Advisory Council, one which prioritizes the voices of people with lived experience and personal impacts regarding environmental justice issues.

We see L.D. 1621 as a starting point for further conversations on environmental justice, a first step in the right direction but only the beginning of this important work. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

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ⁱ [Undocumented immigrants fall through the cracks with child lead poisoning - The New Bedford Light](#)

ⁱⁱ [Asbestos abatement is one of America's deadliest jobs. Does it have to be? | Grist](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Environmental Inequality and Pollution Advantage among Immigrants in the United States - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

^{iv} [Exposure to Flood Hazards in Miami and Houston: Are Hispanic Immigrants at Greater Risk than Other Social Groups? - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

^v [Unhealthy work: Why migrants are especially vulnerable to injury and death on the job \(knowablemagazine.org\)](#)

^{vi} [Farmworkers are dying in extreme heat. Few standards exist to protect them | PBS NewsHour](#)