

Maya Faulstich
Yarmouth ME
LD 2261

Dear honorable members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Maya Faulstich, student activist and resident of Yarmouth ME, and I am testifying in opposition to LD2261. Electric vehicles aren't perfect, but they produce far less air pollution than gas-powered cars, which in addition to being run on fossil fuels that release greenhouse gas emissions, cause health impacts like heart and lung disease, premature deaths, and asthma in kids. I have asthma, and I hate cities because breathing around a bunch of polluting cars is really difficult. It's a horrible experience for anyone, even if you don't have asthma. I wish I could live in a world where I didn't have to hold my nose every time I walked through a big city or had to make sure to keep my inhaler on hand. Strong emissions standards will protect both the environment and the health of people like me.

I am a young person, and I just very recently got my driver's license. I use my parent's car right now, but soon, I will be looking for my own car. I want electric vehicles to be accessible for people looking to buy cars because I care about our air being cleaner and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. Plus, everyone I know who owns an electric car loves it, and constantly raves about it. A survey of EV owners in Maine showed that 98% would recommend an EV to a friend or family member. Wouldn't it be great if electric cars were even more accessible than gas-powered cars, to encourage people to make the cleaner and healthier decision? Their prices are already dropping fast, and their popularity rising. The Advanced Clean Cars Act II would help with this process, but passing LD2261 would slow this process down, allowing other states, including the 13 other states that have passed this act, to have access to newer and cheaper EVs, while leaving Maine behind with more expensive and fossil-fuel-burning cars. Here's something else that shocked me when I learned about this bill: If we fail to adopt the Clean Cars standards, it would be the first time in over two decades that Maine reverted to the weaker emissions standard. Do we really want that possibility weighing on us? No. We want standards that prioritize our health and the world we live in.

And even if you personally aren't a fan of electric cars, this bill isn't just about EVs. It's about undermining a non-partisan process that has been ongoing for the whole year. We can't let a last-minute, half-baked bill override this process that was very carefully considered, researched, and will be voted on tomorrow morning. I was there at that first public hearing last fall for the Clean Cars II Act. I heard the thorough discussion, the many perspectives that have been taken into consideration, and decisions that were made based on science, evidence, and thousands of Mainers' input. Why would we throw away all of that?

For over 20 years, it's been routine for the Board of Environmental Protection to set emissions standards, that's just part of their job. Bringing this all to the legislature would delay, even reverse, badly needed climate action, and not just on electric vehicles. This is a dangerous bill that would allow the legislature to reverse in a moment what the BEP spent a year working towards. We cannot let LD2261 pass. Thank you for your time,

Maya Faulstich