

Testimony of Maria Fuentes
Maine Better Transportation Association
Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

LD 2261 - An Act Designating New Motor Vehicle Emissions Rules as Major Substantive Rules

March 20, 2024

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Maria Fuentes, Executive Director of the Maine Better Transportation Association (MBTA), and on behalf of the MBTA, I speak today in support of LD 2261.

Our organization represents over 700 members who plan, design, build, maintain, or use our transportation system including transportation contractors, engineers and suppliers, bus and rail companies, airports and marine and port interests, and others committed to investing in our transportation infrastructure to boost the state's economy and quality of life.

The Association supports LD 2261 because we consider that rules to establish zero-emission requirements should be major substantive rules, because mandating motor vehicle emissions rules on consumers in Maine would create impacts that would be major and substantive on citizens and businesses.

There has been much discussion and debate relative to Chapter 127-A, the Advanced Clean Cars II Program before the Maine Board of Environmental Protection. It would establish motor vehicle emission standards for new passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty motor vehicles by incorporating the requirements of California's Advanced Clean Cars II regulation.

MBTA is part of the Transportation Working Group of the Maine Climate Council, along with many other organizations and people. We are fully aware that in Maine, the transportation sector is responsible for 49% of the emissions in the state and we are committed to reducing emissions in the transportation sector. However, it is also clear to us that mandating California rules onto Maine would be harmful to citizens, including those in rural parts who drive more miles and have fewer options for travel. We also know that the electric grid and lack of charging stations are two major obstacles that must be dealt with before we can expect a larger shift to electrification.

In the next year, we know there is going to be significantly more charging infrastructure in Maine, which will be one step toward making consumers more comfortable with EVs. But there is much more that needs to happen before electric vehicles make sense for many Mainers. The rules would have an impact on the supply chain, would have an adverse impact on the economy, and could force California-type changes to the program that would be detrimental to Maine people.

Thank you for the work your committee does, and for considering our testimony in support of LD 2261.