



**Testimony in Support of LD 815, An Act to Support School Decarbonization
by David Costello, Climate & Clean Energy Program Director
April 6, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is David Costello. I am the Climate and Clean Energy Program Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), and I am testifying today in support of LD 815, An Act to Act to Support School Decarbonization.

Reducing Maine's Building Sector Energy Usage and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Reducing Maine's second largest source of greenhouse gas pollution, residential, commercial, and public buildings, will require the State to strengthen its building codes and standards, and increase its incentives for energy efficiency improvements and expanded clean energy generation and usage.

School Transformations Can Accelerate Maine's Clean Energy Transition

LD 815 will help in reducing Maine's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by establishing a school decarbonization program to aid Maine schools in achieving carbon neutrality. The new decarbonization program will largely accomplish this by:

- Facilitating access to, and possibly supplying funds for, professional services, including energy audits, technical support, financing, and legal services, to assist in the planning, design or procurement of construction projects, solar power purchases, or equipment; and
- Providing financial assistance for cost-effective energy measures identified in an energy audit or the plans, designs, or procurements of a school facility.

LD 815's added support will not only help in reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions but will also aid in reducing school energy bills; increasing school buildings resilience; improving community shelters; lessening community tax burdens; increasing local economic benefits; and providing expanded health, well-being, and education benefits for both students and the community at large.

Importantly, schools are at the center of most Maine communities and clean energy schools will serve as a visible and compelling demonstration of the value of decarbonization practices and investments, and, in doing so, spur further climate and clean energy action across the state.

For these reasons we urge the Committee to join NRCM in supporting this important clean energy and energy efficiency initiative. Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any questions that you may have.