

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: May 11, 2021

Re: LD 1682: An Act To Require Consideration of Climate and Equity Impacts by the Public Utilities Commission OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Program Manager for Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate and ecological emergency. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030 and demand the equitable implementation of clean renewable energy, ecological land-use practices, and bold community-led action for a more resilient Maine.

The climate crisis is an issue that affects all communities differently in this state and it affects communities unequally. We recognize that many communities and groups may not have the resources to act on climate change, even if they recognize it as a threat. This bill revises the Maine Public Utilities Commission enabling statute to include achieving the State greenhouse gas reduction targets and prioritizing equity as two of its primary missions in all its decision making. This bill would empower the Commission to make decisions that incorporate considerations of the costs and benefits of climate change, in alignment with Maine's statutory climate requirements.

If we are going to electrify our economy to transition our buildings and transportation from fossil fuels to a clean renewable generated electricity grid, the Commission must consider climate in its decision making. The Commission could require consideration of the full costs of energy investments in all decisions and mandate minimizing climate impacts.

Equity and justice concerns will also be elevated in decision making, as well as resilience and adaptation strategies when making investment and planning decisions. The bill elevates environmental justice in Commission decision making by mandating that it address equity and mitigate energy burdens on frontline communities and utility customers who are underserved by utility or electricity policies, programs and systems due to geography, race, income or other socioeconomic factors. To ensure that equity and environmental justice issues are appropriately considered and designed, the Commission could consult with the Maine Climate Council Equity Subcommittee.

Maine Climate Action Now feels it is time to center the impacts on climate change and climate resiliency and the impacts on equity in our state's decision making. The Maine Public Utilities Commission is a good place to start.

We offer our full support for this legislation to require consideration of climate and equity impacts by the PUC. Please vote LD 1682 OUGHT TO PASS for our futures. Thank you.

maineclimateaction.org

contact: maineclimateaction@gmail.com

Amy Eshoo
Maine Climate Action Now

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