



To: Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

From: Audrey Hufnagel and Anna Siegel, Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Date: May 12, 2021

Re: Testimony in support of LD 1659 **An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator**

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Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, our names are Audrey Hufnagel and Anna Siegel, and we proudly write as representatives for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 300 youth from across the state who are fighting for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. We write in support of LD 1659 “An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator”.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a unique economic opportunity as the state of Maine, and the country at large, rethinks how we support our communities and protect the environment. As we head to a “new normal,” we are at a junction where the State can revert to the damaging business-as-usual model that was hurting people and the planet before the pandemic, or we can work climate action and adaptation into our budgets for the future. The Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator will create local jobs in renewables and foster economic growth, helping us to choose the brighter path through this junction.

MYCJ recognizes that transitioning to renewable forms of energy is difficult or impossible for many low-income families. Though investing in renewable energy saves money for households in the long run, many families cannot afford the upfront costs. The Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator will direct forty percent of funds to low income communities, making this transition easier for families and relieve families of the fossil fuel burdens that they currently have to deal with. It will also create over 1,600 accessible jobs in the clean energy sector, expanding the job market and revitalizing our local economy.

Many of the recommendations in the *Maine Won't Wait* 2020 report put forth by the Maine Climate Council place emphasis on the need for energy-efficient infrastructure, which the Accelerator can fund. The Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator will help to make clean

energy projects, such as the Climate Council's goal of retrofitting 130,000 homes by 2030, more cost effective by providing access to funding and reducing market barriers. The Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator is modeled from successful "Green Banks" that have been piloted in several states to great effect. The Connecticut Green Bank was established in 2011, and a recent study from the Berkeley Lab found that since then it has "deployed over \$2.2 billion in capital for clean energy projects across the state. Projects recorded through 2020 show that for every \$1 of public funds committed by the Green Bank that an additional \$7.50 in private investment occurred in the economy."

Finally, this bill would create the Accelerator within Efficiency Maine, preparing the state to receive and maximize federal funds without committing state dollars. The creation of a Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator is a vital part of Maine's future.

For the above reasons, our coalition, Maine Youth for Climate Justice, urges you to vote ought-to-pass on L.D. 1659.

Thank you for your consideration,

Audrey Hufnagel, Anna Siegel, Maine Youth for Climate Justice