



CITY OF PORTLAND
Sustainability Office
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To: Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

From: Troy Moon, Sustainability Director

Date: May 11, 2021

Regarding: City of Portland, Maine testimony to the State of Maine 130th Legislature's JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES, AND TECHNOLOGY in support of LD 1682, *"An Act To Require Consideration of Climate and Equity Impacts by the Public Utilities Commission."*

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the City of Portland in support of LD 1682 *"An Act To Require Consideration of Climate and Equity Impacts by the Public Utilities Commission."*

The Cities of Portland and South Portland recently adopted One Climate Future, a joint plan to eliminate carbon emissions from our cities and to prepare for anticipated impacts of climate change. This plan recognizes that there will need to be significant changes to existing utility regulation to achieve two of the plan's foundational elements: widespread electrification of the economy and equitable outcomes for all residents. Some of these include:

- Better integration of distributed energy resources (DERs) into the electrical grid
- Prioritization of beneficial electrification strategies to support decarbonization
- More transparency and stakeholder participation in Public Utility Commission proceedings, especially as they relate plans to improve transmission and distribution of electricity.
- Phasing out natural gas and other fossil fuel infrastructure to eliminate carbon emissions and improve air quality for everyone, particularly frontline communities.

(Refer to oneclimatefuture.org for further information about these strategies.)

In order to meet these objectives, as well as the decarbonization goals described in the State of Maine's climate action plan, the Public Utilities Commission must account for the climate impacts of their decisions. Under its current policies, the PUC may be forced to reject clean energy investments if they could cut utility profits or increase rates. This does not allow them to account for the long term economic and social costs that will result from climate change: sea level rise, more frequent and increasingly powerful storms, and disruption to agriculture and fisheries. It also ignores social and economic benefits that may result from clean energy policies including job opportunities, improved air quality, and more equitable access to energy resources.

By prioritizing climate, equity, and environmental justice, Maine's PUC will be better positioned to act on climate to meet our State and local climate goals. Therefore, we urge the Committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1682.