



Testimony before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

February 2, 2023

LD 122 – An Act to Authorize the Efficiency Maine Trust to Establish a Program to Support the Uptake of Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicles by Maine Businesses and to Establish a Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicle-to-grid Pilot Project

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Emily K. Green and I am a senior attorney with Conservation Law Foundation. I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of LD 122, An Act to Authorize the Efficiency Maine Trust to Establish a Program to Support the Uptake of Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicles by Maine Businesses and to Establish a Medium-duty and Heavy-duty Zero-emission Vehicle-to-grid Pilot Project.

CLF, founded in 1966, is a public interest advocacy group that works to solve the environmental challenges threatening the people, natural resources and communities in Maine and across New England. In Maine for almost four decades, CLF is a member-supported organization that works to ensure that laws and policies are developed, implemented and enforced that protect and restore our natural resources; are good for Maine's economy and environment; and equitably address the climate crisis.

CLF supports LD 122 because it would take relatively small but important steps to advance Maine's transition to electric vehicles (EVs). Reducing carbon pollution from cars and trucks by moving away from fossil fuel is a key strategy in the state's climate action plan. Maine's Clean Transportation Roadmap further emphasizes the importance of electrification, describing it as the most important, feasible strategy for reducing emissions from transportation.

As we understand it (the amended concept draft is not yet published at the time of drafting), LD 122 would aid Maine's transition to EVs, first, with minor tweaks to the existing EV fund (35-A M.R.S. § 10126) administered by the Efficiency Maine Trust. The proposed minimal adjustments would enhance clarity and smooth the Trust's operation of the state's EV rebate program. We support these fixes.

It is our understanding that LD 122 would also establish a medium- and heavy-duty (MHD) EV pilot program. To achieve Maine's mandatory decarbonization levels, the climate action plan and Clean Transportation Roadmap both specifically call for electrification of these vehicles in addition to personal cars. In Maine, trucks and vans contribute approximately one quarter of transportation carbon pollution, and almost half of smog forming nitrogen oxides and PM2.5

from this sector. Transitioning away from conventional trucks is therefore not only critical for compliance with the state’s greenhouse gas emissions targets, but it also offers significant public health benefits by reducing toxic air pollution on our streets.

We staunchly support policies that will aggressively drive deployment of MHD EVs, policies that are called for by the state’s Clean Transportation Roadmap and necessary to comply with Maine’s mandatory carbon pollution levels (38 M.R.S. § 576-A). However, with the caveat that this pilot must not stand in the way of these strategies, we support the concept of a medium- and heavy-duty EV pilot program because it is a supportive complement that will help address certain barriers to deployment.

Although in many cases, lower operating costs already lead to savings over the life of a MHD EV—and purchase prices are rapidly declining—today capital costs remain a hurdle to fleet uptake. This time-limited pilot would presumably help Maine’s fleet owners and managers overcome this up-front obstacle. Though certainly not adequate on its own, the pilot will contribute to accelerated demand for MHD EVs, helping to advance the market and ultimately greater economies of scale, driving down costs.

Another barrier to widespread use of MHD EVs is the misperception that electric versions of these vehicles are not ready to hit the roads in Maine. This concern is generally overblown; commercial MHD EV offerings today are capable of supporting the majority of truck uses, and rapid technological progress continues to expand commercial offerings and practical applications.

Maine is ready for MHD EVs today. We support the proposed demonstration project not because it is necessary to prove that MHD EVs are feasible, but because it will help the people and businesses of Maine reach this inescapable conclusion. The pilot will increase Mainers’ understanding of the viability of these technologies and aid businesses in gaining familiarity with these highly efficient and cost-saving vehicles. The pilot must not be used to obstruct other policies to speed the deployment of these vehicles.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testify in support of LD 122.

Emily Green
Conservation Law Foundation
LD 122

Please find the testimony of Conservation Law Foundation in support of LD 122 attached.
Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
Please contact Emily K. Green at egreen@clf.org with any questions.