

To: Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Becky Layton Bartovics

Date: April 7, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 1262: **An Act to Improve Government Transparency and Accountability by Establishing a Process to Allow a Person to Require the State to Enforce Certain Laws and Rules**

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am a resident of North Haven, a farmer, grandmother and descended from a long line of lawyers and judges. Some of the latter rubbed off over time. As an active member of the Legislative team of Sierra Club Maine, I have submitted testimony over the past few years. However, I am writing solely as a citizen of Maine in support of LD 1262 as amended by Representative Friedman which is in line with the efforts of the chapter.

Maine historically had a robust DEP with a staff heralded across the nation for its excellence based in science. During the LePage Administration many of those scientists were let go, or not replaced. In its wisdom, the current Administration has not replaced them, ostensibly due to financial concerns. There is a woeful shortage of staff to cover one of the longest coasts in the US, and to enforce our environmental laws. Add to that the current Federal Administration's disregard for the Constitution and especially the diminution of the Environmental Protection Agency along with reduction of that agency's purview by the current President, and we are in a difficult situation to protect the environment of Maine and its legacy for future generations.

Mainers care deeply about our environment. We have many laws that support careful administration of our environment that are largely based on EPA standards and regulations. With the underpinnings of those laws at risk, it is **imperative** that the State of Maine seek to secure our ability to provide adequate protection for what we have here.

This law enables citizens to actively engage in our ability to enforce and improve the laws that protect us and our children by supporting Clean Air and Clean Water- Maine's legacy from Senator Muskie. It also enables citizens to take agencies to court if they do not comply with enforcement of the existing laws.

And perhaps most importantly it creates the ability of the agency to cover costs of enforcement, *not as a tax but as a cost of doing business*. Based in federal law, this underused method would hold developers and industries to a standard here that would not cost the taxpayer and supports citizen involvement.

I urge you to vote "ought to Pass" on LD 1262

Respectfully submitted

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