

To: Transportation Committee

From: Cole Cochrane, Clean Transportation Advocate

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1138, An Act to Reduce Pollution
Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's
Climate Action Plan



Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee: My name is Cole Cochrane, I am the Clean Transportation Advocate for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), an organization representing over 400 young working Mainers. I am also a current college student, studying economics and public policy at Harvard. I am delivering testimony on MYCJ's behalf to encourage the Transportation Committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1138, An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan.

Our organization recognizes the predominant role the transportation sector plays in contributing to Maine's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Accounting for nearly half of all statewide emissions, it would be impossible to achieve our pollution reduction targets without meaningfully addressing transportation. We also recognize that the primary driver as to why the transportation sector is highly polluting is due to our nearly-sole reliance on private vehicles, one of the most environmentally dangerous forms of transportation. The EPA reports that when driving alone, which is the case for over 77 percent of workers in Maine, the average vehicle spews 0.89 pounds of carbon dioxide per passenger mile.^{1 2} To put into perspective, a bus would

¹ <https://www.bts.gov/sites/bts.dot.gov/files/states2020/Maine.pdf>

² <https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/greenhouse-gas-emissions-typical-passenger-vehicle>

emit 56% fewer emissions. Moreover, our reliance on only one form of transportation accompanies a suite of issues related to accessibility, affordability, and reliability. Based on the 2025 PTAC report, 3 in 5 Maine adults experience transportation insecurity, meaning a majority of Mainers did not have access to transportation in a safe or timely manner. Further, the costs of car ownership on average has exceeded \$1,000 per month, reaching an all-time high. The way our transportation system has become not only the highest polluting sector, but also deeply expensive and inaccessible, is a policy choice. Policymakers have enabled the Department of Transportation to perpetuate practices that no longer serve Mainers.

Although intended to be a climate solution, LD 1138 is designed to a) diversify and increase resilience of the transportation system, b) deliver tangible and localized benefits to communities impacted by roadway expansion, and c) protect taxpayers from expensive, highly polluting, and unsafe projects. First, by requiring projects that would offset pollution from roadway expansions, the state effectively diversifies transportation choices. Whether it be an investment in active transportation infrastructure, expanded city bus services, or rural microtransit options, these additional choices provide Mainers affordable alternatives to access their communities and basic necessities. These are not esoteric offset projects– these go right into your communities. After doing some research, I found some projects in your districts that is definitionally an offset:

- Senator Nangle, Westbrook is seeking to add bicycle/pedestrian safety improvements on a roughly 1-mile stretch of road;³
- Representative Crafts, Damariscotta wants to construct pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes on Main Street;⁴

³ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Westbrook.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Damariscotta.pdf>

- Representative Ray, Lincolnville is looking to upgrade the Isleboro ferry terminal to accommodate hybrid ferry charging;⁵
- Representative Albert, Van Buren would like to study mobility improvements for the Route 1 downtown area;⁶ and
- Senator Farrin, Norridgewock` is looking to do some bicycle/pedestrian rehabilitation along route 2.⁷

This legislation attempts to find balance in how we invest in transportation, not only for the sake of reducing pollution, but to deliver these benefits that would boost the local economy.

Legislators, advocates and the agency have worked diligently on designing a thorough climate solution that at its core recognizes the need for fiscal responsibility, local economic development, and accountability for bureaucratic decision making. With that in mind, I encourage the committee to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1138. Thank you for your time and consideration.

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Lincolnville.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Madawaska.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/Norridgewock.pdf>

