



## Maine Chapter

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**To:** Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities & Technology

**From:** Sierra Club Maine

Zak Ringelstein, Legislative Team co-chair and Sue Levene, Chapter Chair

**Date:** April 9, 2019

**Re:** Testimony in Support of LD 1282: An Act To Establish a Green New Deal for Maine

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and the distinguished members of this committee. My name is Sue Levene. I am a resident of Phippsburg and the Chair of Sierra Club Maine Chapter. I am here in support of LD 1282, An Act To Establish a Green New Deal for Maine. I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to all the public testimony being submitted today, and I want to thank all the amazing and talented youth of Maine who came to Augusta today to lobby on behalf of our future. I appreciate your willingness to address our looming climate crisis. We are already starting to see the water rise in our low-lying neighborhoods and roads.

The mission of the Sierra Club is: To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. I am here representing Sierra Club Maine's 18,000 members and supporters. We are one of 63 chapters nationwide that speaks with one voice.

The Sierra Club is a strong supporter of Maine's efforts and the efforts of the whole country to thoughtfully and energetically enact a green, new, deal.

A green, new, deal is a big, bold transformation of the economy to tackle the twin crises of inequality and climate change. The vision is that addressing climate change and inequality together leads us to a better future. At the heart of inequality is a refusal to REQUIRE that actions be equitable, inclusive and just.

LD 1282 using our best efforts will guide us to that better future.

Part A - sets a firm commitment of reaching 80% renewables for retail electricity sales in Maine by 2040. In addition, the current Maine greenhouse gas reduction goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% - 80% in the long term, (38 MRSA Sec 576 sub-3) is updated to require that goal be met by 2040. **The Sierra Club encourages you to adopt a faster timeline. We would like to see the deadline moved up to 2030.**

Part B - Establishes a Green New Deal task force, with volunteer members, to develop a plan to advance environmental sustainability, renewable energy and economic growth for the State with a report due January 15, 2020.

- A renewable resources strategy
- A high-quality job creation, retention and training strategy
- A residential energy strategy

Part C - Creates a virtual net metering program for public school solar energy systems. The voluntary program would allow participating schools to begin using virtual net metering for solar photovoltaic energy installations no later than December 31, 2021.

Part D - Creates a volunteer commission on a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy, with staffing by the Public Utilities Commission. That's what this bill is about. A JUST TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY. The commission shall submit annual reports to the legislature.

Sierra Club Maine supports LD 1282 as an important foundational bill to move our State to a good, low carbon, economy. It takes courage to step up and address our carbon emissions issues and the daunting consequences our past behavior is having on our climate and the future of our way of life. This moment reminds me of the moment when President John F. Kennedy put his courage and faith in our national capacity and made the bold decision to go to the moon in 10 years. Much of our modern technology we enjoy is a direct result of his bold decision in 1962. Today, our children and their children and future generations are depending on you to lead us with your own faith and courage so that we can all thrive in the future that awaits us.

On behalf of the Sierra Club's Maine Chapter, I want to state that we are ready to do whatever we can to help you develop working solutions to stop our ever-growing carbon emissions and the resulting climate change crisis that will prevail if we do nothing. We believe that together, we can create a thriving low carbon emitting future that provides equity, inclusion, justice and a healthy world for all of us. And we hope you do too.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 1282, and we offer our assistance as you consider the Green New Deal legislation.