



# SIERRA CLUB

## MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology  
From: Patricia Rubert-Nason, Sierra Club Maine  
Date: April 14, 2021  
Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1264

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Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Patricia Rubert-Nason and I write on behalf of Sierra Club and the over 20,000 members and supporters in Maine. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we defend everyone's right to a healthy world. We urge you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 1264.

According to the IPCC (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and the best available science, to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, we need to cut net greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to zero by 2050. This is a daunting goal and requires a rapid transition, but it is vital to Maine. Like many northern areas, we are experiencing more warming than the global average and we are already seeing the impacts. Failing to meet the 1.5°C goal will make it much, much worse. Maine's coasts are at risk from sea level rise. Snow sports are at risk from warming winters. And our forests are at risk from changes in temperature and precipitation. All of these are vital contributors both to Maine's economy and our special character.

A key strategy for decarbonizing buildings and transportation is electrification paired with decarbonizing the grid. This strategy is sometimes referred to as "electrify everything." Heat pumps play a key role in this strategy by providing efficient electric heating for buildings. Moreover, heating with a heat pump is cheaper than heating with heating oil (the most common heating fuel in Maine). This is vital in Maine where many families spend thousands of dollars every winter on heating their homes.

One of the challenges with heat pumps, however, is that they have a high up front cost which many families cannot afford to pay, even if they will recoup the money in savings on heating bills fairly quickly. And not everyone is able to get a bank loan. LD 1264 would offer an alternative financing option which could help make heat pumps (and energy cost savings) available to more households, including renters and low income

households. It is one more tool to help up decarbonize rapidly and equitably. Accordingly, the Sierra club urges you to vote “ought-to-pass” on LD 1264.