



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology

From: Patricia Rubert-Nason, Sierra Club Maine

Date: April 27, 2021

Re: Testimony Opposed to LD 1554 - An Act To Provide Climate Change Transition Assistance for Maine's Energy-intensive Businesses

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 would like to express our concern regarding LD 1554, An Act To Provide Climate Change Transition Assistance for Maine's Energy-intensive Businesses.

It is true that decarbonizing our economy requires decarbonizing all sectors and that certain segments of industry may be particularly challenging to decarbonize. However, while businesses do need help to decarbonize their operations, it is not clear to us that a new program is needed to achieve that goal. Efficiency Maine has existing commercial and industrial programs to address this market. Is there a specific deficiency in the existing programs that this bill is addressing? Furthermore, this bill, as written, does not clearly define what qualifies as an energy intensive industry or the nature of the improvements that ought to be covered.

In conjunction, these shortcomings raise our concern that this may not be the best use of carbon dioxide allowance funds. This is a finite pot of money with many worthy demands upon it and Efficiency Maine's existing programs are currently limited in their reach by the availability of funds. It is essential that every dollar be put to work as effectively and efficiently as possible. New programs should be critically evaluated to ensure that they are best serving Maine citizens and are efficient vehicles for decarbonization.

It is also not clear why this is structured as forgivable loans, which is not typical of Efficiency Maine programs and limits the number of projects that can be completed using this pool of funds as they would not be able to be reused.

All told, the Sierra Club asks that the committee carefully evaluate whether this program is needed and would result in the best use of scarce funds. Without changes to clarify the use of funds to obtain the greatest greenhouse gas savings, we urge the committee to vote Ought not to Pass.

Respectfully,

Patricia Rubert-Nason
Legislative Team Volunteer and Resident of Fort Kent