

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Oppose LD 1562 "An Act To Encourage the Use of Renewable Energy"

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Adam Crepeau. I serve as a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to LD 1562.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is opposed to LD 1562 because it seeks to pick winners and losers in the energy sector. The bill has an ambitious goal of ensuring 100 percent of energy consumed in the state produced by renewable resources by 2050 through the establishment of the Renewable Energy Program. While the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a laudable one, the consequences of this legislation may exceed the benefits.

The Renewable Energy Program would be tasked with collaborating with the Public Utilities Commission, the Efficiency Maine Trust Board and the Department of Environmental Protection to establish a plan for becoming 100 percent renewable. These entities would submit a report to this committee to recommend how to proceed with this goal. With all of the proposed legislation to establish new taxes and fees on Mainers to promote environmental causes this legislative session, The Maine Heritage Policy Center is concerned that more of these proposals will be developed as a result of the Renewable Energy Program.

In addition, energy consumption should be determined by the free market and the viability of the resource. Too often, some renewable resources are propped up while others are limited by arbitrary caps on energy production. This conversation needs to begin with how the state produces energy. If we are truly concerned about the state only consuming renewable resources, this committee has an obligation to lift the arbitrary 100 megawatt cap on hydropower energy production in the state of Maine. The question needs to be posed: why is this cap in place and how does it benefit Mainers? Would Maine be closer to the goal stated in LD 1562 if the cap is lifted?

According to the United States Energy Information Administration, Mainers primarily consume petroleum due the cold winters in Maine.¹ In addition, Maine consumes little energy compared to other states, ranking 44th overall.² This amounts to approximately 0.4 percent of total energy consumed in the nation.³ In essence, Mainers could consume 100 percent of their energy from renewable resources tomorrow with little overall impact or benefit on the environment.

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=ME>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

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For those reasons, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, "Ought Not to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.