

# ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL MAINE PEOPLE

**LD 1621** will define, prioritize, and support meaningful community engagement, equitable decision-making, and just environmental policies.

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**Climate change and environmental hazards are inextricably linked to equity. Solutions must be, too.**

- In Maine and across the world, climate change and environmental concerns pose the greatest threats to communities that are already marginalized, overburdened, or underserved. For example, people who live in substandard housing, who are experiencing homelessness, or who lack access to reliable transportation are more vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather caused by climate change.
- The Maine Climate Council's Equity Subcommittee recommends meaningful community engagement and equitable implementation of the strategies contained in Maine Won't Wait, the state's four-year plan for climate action, to ensure the thoughtful distribution of benefits and mitigation of burdens.

**State agencies need tools to assess environmental justice in their decision-making.**

- State agencies and policymakers address environmental threats through public hearings, rulemaking, licensing, permitting, renewable energy procurements, utility rate-making, and more.
- Every day, these processes unfold without formal guidance on evaluating and mitigating environmental and health impacts on Maine's overburdened communities – or even on identifying impacted and frontline communities.
- The decades-long recognition of environmental justice principles elsewhere in the country and enactment of environmental justice laws in other New England states provide models for identifying, empowering, and protecting historically overburdened communities.
- Adopting environmental justice definitions and practices that reflect Maine's unique situations and communities will ensure that we pursue and achieve our environmental and climate mandates in an equitable manner, and that impacted communities are able to fairly participate in the process.

**Maine must follow through in establishing clear, enforceable standards for engaging and protecting environmental justice communities, including low-income and people of color.**

- The prior Legislature tasked the Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future with advancing recommendations on incorporating equity considerations into decision-making at various agencies, which resulted in a 2022 report on the topics and proposed legislation.
- Despite piecemeal progress, Maine still lacks a protective legal framework to ensure that environmental policies are developed, implemented, and enforced in close partnership with the communities impacted "first and worst" by environmental and climate threats.
- This bill would provide long-overdue protection to Maine's most underserved communities, who have faced and continue to face a disproportionate share of the state's environmental, energy, and transportation burdens and lack of access to renewable and affordable energy and transportation options.
- Maine can be a leader on equity and environmental justice and ensure that climate strategies and our clean energy transition are implemented in a just manner. This bill will ensure that environmental justice populations receive a fair, proportionate share of clean energy benefits.

**Support LD 1621. Advance environmental justice and equity to protect all Maine people.**

For more information, please contact  
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# Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is a partnership of 37 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations representing over 120,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that our environment provides.

**We are counting on Maine policymakers to take the important steps needed to protect Maine's extraordinary environment so all Maine people and Maine communities can thrive.**

