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Coalition and Lawmakers Announce Environmental Priorities for 2024 Legislative Session

AUGUSTA, ME – Today, Maine's [Environmental Priorities Coalition \(EPC\)](#), a partnership of 34 environmental, conservation, climate action, and public health organizations, joined legislative leaders, advocates, and Mainers from across the state to announce their collective priorities for the 2024 legislative session.

Each year, the EPC comes together to identify and collaborate on a slate of priority bills. These aren't the only bills the organizations track, support, and celebrate, but they represent some of the best collective opportunities to advance climate action, further environmental justice, protect biodiversity and the environment, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.

"Our 2024 policy priorities reflect the importance of collectively tackling the climate crisis, advancing environmental justice and equity, and protecting the treasured wildlife and outdoor spaces that Mainers hold dear," said **Kathleen Meil, Senior Director of Policy and Partnerships at Maine Conservation Alliance**, and spokesperson for the Coalition. "As we see the impacts of climate change intensifying in our state, we're coming together to work towards a sustainable and equitable future for all," continued Meil.

The **six bills** selected by the coalition were introduced by legislative sponsors and advocates during a legislative kick-off event today at the State House. **They include the following bills:**

- LD 2007: Recognize tribal self-determination
- LD 1621: Advance environmental justice for all
- LD 993: Secure the future of forests in Maine
- LD 2077: Rethink natural gas to protect health, climate, and ratepayers
- LD 1215: End the sale of flavored tobacco products
- LD 1537: Protect Maine's landmark PFAS products law

Learn more about the package of priority bills [on our website](#).

From lawmakers and advocates:

Maulian Bryant, Penobscot Nation Tribal Ambassador and Wabanaki Alliance Board President, speaking about the bill to recognize the Wabanaki Nations' inherent right to self-determination:

"The Wabanaki Alliance is so pleased and grateful that the Environmental Priorities Coalition has chosen to continue to support the efforts to restore tribal sovereignty in our homelands now called Maine. The Wabanaki Tribal Nations are seeking fairness and equality and ask to be treated the same as every other tribe across the country. When we have access to our rights as federally recognized tribes and the ability to experience true self determination our communities will prosper, we will be more capable to carry out our ancestral duty of being good stewards of the lands and waters, and the benefits will extend to our neighbors in all corners of the state."

Phelps Turner, Senior Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation, speaking about LD 1621, the bill to advance environmental justice for all:

“Funding this bill that the House and Senate have already approved last year will be the first step in Maine to ensuring environmental justice is a cornerstone of any decision made by state agencies, beginning with the Department of Environmental Protection.”

Representative Maggie O’Neil, addressing LD 993 and the need to secure the future of forests in Maine by creating a Forest Advisory Board:

“Maine’s forests are critically important to our state. Their healthy future is integral to the well-being of Maine’s people, wildlife, communities, and economy. Our forests can help us slow climate change by absorbing greenhouse gasses, and adapt to it by providing large blocks of unbroken habitat. But they are facing many challenges, from insects & disease to development pressure. That’s why it’s important to bring together a range of stakeholders, including landowners, loggers, and biologists, to advise the Maine Forest Service and to work together to ensure healthy forests well into the future.”

Ania Wright, Legislative and Political Specialist, Sierra Club Maine Chapter, addressing LD 2077, the bill to rethink our natural gas system to protect health, the climate, and ratepayers:

“Maine’s fracked gas distribution system poses threats to Maine people and businesses with volatile costs, our climate goals with greenhouse gas emissions, and public health with dangerous pollution. We need LD 2077 because thoughtful consideration and regulation of the gas distribution system will protect ratepayers, safeguard public health, and align Maine with statutory climate goals.”

Rebecca Boulos, Executive Director, Maine Public Health Association, addressing LD 1215, the bill to end the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine:

“Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine will prevent a new generation of youth from developing tobacco addiction and safeguard our environment from hazardous waste. For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black, Indigenous and Persons of Color, LGBTQ+, low-income, homeless, and other already marginalized

communities with addictive products that pollute our water and wildlife with toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and residual nicotine. We need to take flavored tobacco products off the market now, for the health of Maine's communities and environment."

Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Programs and Policy for Defend Our Health, speaking about LD 1537, the bill to protect Maine's landmark PFAS products law:

"Maine has been a leader in passing policies that will protect our communities from toxic PFAS contamination. LD 1537 will harmonize Maine's law with other states that followed Maine's lead on this important issue by phasing out PFAS in several product categories and simplify the disclosure aspect of the law to make it easier for manufacturers to comply. We are grateful that the EPC recognizes the importance of protecting Maine's first in the world policy to phase out toxic PFAS from our products, which will protect public health and the environment for all Mainers."

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Maine Conservation Alliance protects Maine's environment and our democracy through education, collaboration, and advocacy.

Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition is a partnership of 34 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 the environment provides.