

ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

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

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.

Maine's environmental agency needs tools to assess environmental justice in its decision-making.

- The Department of Environmental Protection addresses environmental threats through public hearings, rule-making, licensing, permitting, 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 a model 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.

Maine must follow through in establishing clear, enforceable standards for engaging and protecting environmental justice communities.

- 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 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.
- LD 1621 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 and energy burdens and lack of access to clean, healthy, open spaces, and ensure that climate strategies and our clean energy transition are implemented in a just manner.
- The Legislature passed LD 1621 last year and placed it on the special appropriations table. Full funding is essential to advancing environmental justice and equity.

Support LD 1621. Advance environmental justice and equity.

For more information, please contact
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Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is an inclusive statewide alliance of 34 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.

We are counting on Maine policymakers to protect the extraordinary environment so all people and communities in Maine can thrive.

