

FAQs: Climate Education LD 1902

Let's get our facts straight!

Is this bill a top-down government mandate?

Guided by the priorities of the educators involved in crafting the language of this bill, LD 1902 is emphatically not a mandate, and allows great flexibility in how districts tailor the support they receive to their unique needs, community, and landscape. There are no specific curriculum decisions being guided by this bill, only support on meeting standards already in place.



How is this bill equitable?

Equity was the central priority in shaping this bill. LD 1902 prioritizes schools currently underserved by climate science education. Maine has a rich landscape of supportive community organizations that partner with schools and provide capacity that schools lack right now, as demonstrated during covid. Each Maine county is served by over a dozen community partner programs in climate education and professional development, and these organizations are ready to partner with schools on this pilot program. The funded DOE position is intended to support schools through the process and ensure that funds go where they are most needed.

Could the money be better used for another purpose?

Since the proposal is to draw \$3 million from the general fund, there are no alternative education use for these dollars, and no other proposals on the table. These funds are not being drawn out of the existing education budget, but added to them. This is a priority that has been established by many educators and students across the state.

Are there many groups that don't want this to pass?

The Maine Principal's Association and Maine Curriculum Leaders Association wrote neutral letters naming concerns and opportunities. Many groups have supported the bill with written or live testimony: the Maine Science Teachers Association, the Maine Public Health Association, Maine Association of School Nurses, UMaine Cooperative Extension, Maine Environmental Education Association, and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, plus many more traditional environmental organizations.

Is this bill based on actual teacher needs?

The bill's creation was driven by hundreds of teachers, students, and organizational partners during the Maine Climate Education Summit in 2021, and with the involvement and feedback of the Dept. of Education. Teachers also expressed their top need: for climate education professional development in a 2019 Maine census of needs. The bill funds a position at the Department of Education to support districts in applying and implementing their professional development, and centering equity in the program.