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Testimony of Kelt Wilska, Energy Justice Manager, Maine Conservation Voters
Before the Board of Environmental Protection
In Support of Draft Rule Chapter 127-A
Advanced Clean Cars II Program
August 17, 2023

Good afternoon. My name is Kelt Wilska and I am the Energy Justice Manager at Maine Conservation Voters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Maine's environment, democracy, and climate future. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Draft Rule Chapter 127-A, the *Advanced Clean Cars II Program*.

Maine's transportation sector accounts for 49% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.¹ Roughly 60% of these transportation emissions are from light-duty passenger vehicles.² Accordingly, Maine has set statutory cross-sector emissions reduction goals for 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.³ In order to meet these statutory targets, Maine must implement the Advanced Clean Cars II regulations as recommended in the *Maine Clean Transportation Roadmap*. The *Roadmap* states in no uncertain terms that "The most important regulatory driver in the electrification of Maine's light-duty vehicles in the next two decades will be through Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) standards."⁴

ACC II will require automakers to gradually increase their sales of new electric vehicles (EVs) in Maine, reducing the carbon emissions that are doing immense damage to our planet's climate, saving Mainers money by weaning Maine off the volatile fossil fuel market, and reducing unhealthy air pollution. In 2020, passenger vehicles represented 94% of the nation's on-road vehicles and generated over one million tons of ozone emissions. Right here in Maine, 40% of our counties that reported air quality data received poor grades from the American Lung Association this year due to high ozone days.⁵ The transition to electric vehicles is without

¹https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/9th_GHG_Report_FINAL%20%282%29.pdf at 2

²<https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/Maine%20Clean%20Transportation%20Roadmap%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf> at 3

³https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020_printable_12.1.20.pdf at 6

⁴<https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/Maine%20Clean%20Transportation%20Roadmap.pdf> at 29

⁵ <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/maine>

question an environmental justice issue, with historically marginalized communities that have borne the brunt of pollution standing to benefit greatly from cleaner air.

Implementing these regulations would not be starting from ground-zero. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles in Maine increased by 90% and the number of public charging stations increased by 62%.⁶ The demand for EVs is here, and automakers are prioritizing the states that are adopting strong regulations just like these. Maine has the opportunity to either send the right message or be left behind.

Not only are electric vehicles better for Maine's air and climate, they will also save Mainers money. A study from Consumer Reports shows that when the national average gas price rose sharply to \$4.31/gallon in 2022 with electricity prices at \$0.14/kWh, EV owners could save between \$1,800 and \$2,600 in operating and maintenance costs for every 15,000 miles they drove.⁷ Moreover, an EV purchased in 2026 will cost roughly \$3000-\$4000 less than a traditional gas-powered vehicle over a 10-year lifespan,⁸ and an EV purchased in 2035 will cost roughly \$7,500-\$8,500 less over the same time period.⁹ These are no small sums for low- to moderate-income Mainers who have been struggling to pay their electricity and heating bills due to the volatile fossil fuel market that has only been exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

As climate change worsens and extreme weather conditions increase in frequency, electric vehicles can provide another layer of resiliency to our grid through their batteries. Instead of a situation like last year's Christmas storm where tens of thousands of Mainers were left without electricity, electric vehicles can offer a lifesaving source of electricity and heat. And the more EV batteries we have available to our grid, the more electricity rates will go down across the board, further easing the pain from fossil fuel-related price spikes.

Implementing ACC II will mitigate the effects of climate change that have been widely felt in Maine this summer, reduce unhealthy air pollution that inequitably burdens our state's most vulnerable communities, and save Mainers money. Increasing the sale of electric vehicles in Maine to 82% by 2032 as written in these proposed regulations is a strong start to an equitable transition that will only accelerate with its implementation. Thank you for your time.

⁶<https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/Maine%20Clean%20Transportation%20Roadmap%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf> at 3

⁷https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press_release/new-consumer-reports-analysis-shows-rising-gas-prices-ramp-up-savings-for-ev-owners/

⁸ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/barcu/regact/2022/accii/isor.pdf> at 144

⁹ Id. at 145