

**Testimony in support of LD 1276, An Act to Create and Sustain Jobs through  
Development of Cooperatives and Employee-owned Businesses**

**By**

**Andrew W. Fuller, founder of Maine Camp Outfitters in Deer Isle, Maine**

**Before the Committee on Taxation**

**Thursday, April 13, 2023**

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and members of the Committee, my name is Andy Fuller and I write to encourage the passage of LD 1276, an Act to Create and Sustain Jobs through Development of Cooperatives and Employee-owned Businesses.

For my part, my experience with the creation of an employee-owned business is very recent. 32 years ago, I founded Island Approaches, which was followed by Maine Camp Outfitters and Maine Promotional – small companies located on Deer Isle – and today I am a member of the employee-owned cooperative they transitioned to become in August, 2022.

As Representative Eaton, Senator Grohoski and others know quite well, getting to Deer Isle – much less finding affordable housing and working there - can be a challenge.

Yet the people who call Deer Isle home are who helped grow an idea into a successful business. As I said in a [MaineBiz](#) article, I had some offers to purchase the business, but they were going to take it off the island.

Frankly, I had put too much effort into everything on the island and wanted to keep it here for our customers and community, and create ownership opportunities for our employees. An employee-owned business was an ideal way for me to see others take advantage of the fruits of their labor.

Today, a Deer Isle native who started working in the warehouse and shipping department 19 years ago is our general manager. Given the opportunity, Melissa Daniels and other members of our employee-owned business seized it, and are building new opportunities for themselves and others.

In that regard, they have not been alone. Crisscross Maine, and you'll find numerous examples of owners like me who have already used cooperatives and employee-owned businesses to create pathways to good lives for their employees.

Plainly, we've all been living through difficult economic times. Whether you were a business owner trying to keep the doors open or a family wondering how to keep body and soul alive, these past few years have been tough on everyone.

Thankfully, LD 1276 can help encourage and support the entrepreneurial spirit that has sustained Mainers through good times and bad, and I encourage your approval of this measure.

Sincerely,



Andrew W. Fuller  
Founder, Maine Camp Outfitters  
300 Sunset Road  
Sunset, ME 04681