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TO: Senator Chip Curry, Representative Tiffany Roberts  
Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business  
FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations  
RE: Testimony in Support of LD 2133, An Act to Expand the Use of Career and Technical Education Centers in the Development of the Electrician Workforce  
DATE: January 23, 2024

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Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, I am Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations for the Maine Community College System, and I am providing testimony in support of LD 2133, *An Act to Expand the Use of Career and Technical Education Centers in the Development of the Electrician Workforce*, on behalf of the Maine Community College System.

Educating the skilled trades workforce has been a central part of the mission of Maine's community colleges since our inception as vocational technical institutes. And, throughout that time, we relied on Maine's CTE's to provide strong fundamentals upon which we can build.

All seven of our colleges provide some form of electrical technology education and six of the colleges have programs that specifically educate residential, commercial, and industrial electricians, providing the classroom and hands-on education within their curriculum that qualifies graduates to sit for the exam and pursue licensure. In the last 20 years over 2,000 students have graduated from our certificate, diploma, and associate degree electrical programs. Our electrical programs are a critical educational resource for Maine.

First of all, thank you for passing LD 1713 last session that clarified how Maine's Community College students are credited for their time with us. We believe it is time now to look at Maine's CTE electrical programs. We wholeheartedly agree with the sponsor that Maine's CTE students who are interested in pursuing a career in electrical technology should be allowed to take the exam upon completion of the program and should be credited 1,000 work hours in the field of electrical installation. Many CTE students need or want to work and this statutory change would allow them to do so.

This statutory change is a good first step and would strengthen the pathway to a community college degree. We are proud of our electrical programs and the faculty who lead them and we respect our colleagues at Maine's CTE programs. These programs are a critical resource in training the residential, commercial, and industrial electricians that are in such high demand by employers in Maine.

Thank you.