



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Labor & Housing
From: Ania Wright, Legislative & Political Specialist, Sierra Club Maine
Date: February 6, 2024
Re: Testimony in Support of **LD 373: An Act to Ensure Maine Employer and Employee Harmony in Climate and Energy Jobs**

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and esteemed members of the Committee on Labor and Housing:

I am submitting the following testimony on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nationwide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. We urge the Committee to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 373.

Here in Maine, we know that the bold goals outlined in the Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan will require a strong clean energy workforce. Furthermore, Maine is in the midst of allocating once-in-a-generation federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act (IIJA and IRA) to transform our climate, energy, broadband, and other physical infrastructure.

Ensuring that workers have adequate labor protections and family sustaining pay is essential to accomplishing these goals as swiftly as science requires and to achieving a just energy transition. The IRA and IIJA recognize the critical link between a well-trained workforce and labor agreements that secure uninterrupted flows of work, including in critical sectors like public transit. Fifty-four programs within the IIJA and IRA (totaling \$75 billion) encourage or permit green workforce development activities¹. Since the IRA and IIJA give considerable latitude to states to implement the labor standards referenced in these landmark bills, LD 373 will provide both clarity and continuity -- not only with federal law, but with the legislation this body passed last year (LD 1756) to expand labor protections by banning the ability of employers to hold mandatory captive audience meetings during union organizing drives.

At a moment when Maine badly needs more school bus drivers and public transit workers, broadband installers and maintenance workers, and skilled craftspeople for our clean energy transition, passing this bill would ensure that these sectors develop at the speed and scale required without costly disruptions from avoidable labor disputes.

¹<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unlocking-new-federal-infrastructure-funding-to-drive-green-workforce-development/>

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please vote 'ought to pass' on LD 373.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Legislative and Political Specialist
Sierra Club Maine