

## **Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs**

### **RE: L.D. 210 – “An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027”**

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo and Representative Gattine. My name is Grant Provost I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7, Vice President for the Maine State AFL-CIO and the recording Secretary for the Maine State Building and Construction Trades Council. I serve on the State Workforce Board, the Central Maine and Western Maine Workforce Board, and the Offshore Wind Road Map Committee, the Prevailing Wage Board. I rise in favor of the creation of a Department of Energy Resources within the supplemental Budget for 2025-2027.

Establishing the Maine Department of Energy Resources outside of the Governor's Office, where GEO currently resides, would allow for a more integrated, comprehensive, and consistent approach to the planning and management of Maine's energy system, helping Maine more effectively prioritize affordable and reliable energy for all Maine people and businesses. While energy is an essential part of our everyday lives, it

currently is not represented in the Cabinet but is in the majority of states. We ask to keep in step with other states and as this is a budget neutral initiative during a tight budget cycle it will help to clarify roles of GEO and simplify decision making. With the growing impacts of climate change have emphasized the nexus of energy, resilience, grid planning, etc. As we've witnessed from recent storms, with some of the most frequent power outages in the country and challenges associated with rebuilding more resilient communities, our state needs a longer term, coordinated focus on our energy infrastructure. In recent years, the Maine Legislature has expanded GEO's responsibilities with critical efforts needed to pursue a more affordable, reliable and clean energy future for Maine, and the office has worked to secure more than \$200 million in federal funding to support grid resilience and innovation, energy efficiency, and workforce development, among other key investments for Maine. Elevating GEO to a cabinet-level position would make the office commensurate with these added responsibilities. The creation of an agency will also support the ability to retain highly qualified professional staff who are dedicated to public service.

The Ironworkers were lucky enough to win a Clean Energy Workforce Grant from the Governor's Energy Office and GEO has been great to work with over the course of three years. Ironworker Local 7 Members are benefitting from the training and workforce education they are receiving and are better off today because of the hard work GEO puts in every day. It is a pleasure to partner with this office, GEO should have a chance to continue on the path ahead as every Mainer will benefit.

I appreciate your time,

Grant Provost

Ironworkers Local 7

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