

Grant Provost
Brunswick
LD 226

Good morning, Senator Tepler and Representative Doudera. My name is Grant Provost. I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7, Vice President for the Maine State AFL-CIO, and 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, the Offshore Wind Road Map Committee, and the Prevailing Wage Board.

I oppose both bills, LD 226, An Act to Protect the Cultural Resources and Historical Heritage of Sears Island in Searsport by Extending Conservation Easement Protections, and LD 735, An Act to Protect Sand Dunes on Sears Island and to Establish Criteria for Legislation Regarding Land Development.

If any State should not limit its economic opportunity, it's Maine. Currently, businesses leave the State as fast as young Mainers; we should invite viable economic drivers with open arms. Offshore Wind has proven to be such an economic driver. States to our south are creating thousands of good-paying union construction jobs; developers are pouring money into supply chains, port development, and marine infrastructure. Not just New England States and not just blue states, but states interested in diversifying their electric portfolios with some home-grown American energy independence.

These bills before you today will do the opposite, covered with a blanket of environmentalism and social justice. LD226 and LD 775 would eliminate some of Maine's largest opportunities. One, fight climate change, possibly humanity's most existential threat, and two, create hundreds upon thousands of good-paying union jobs. These two opportunities are part of a broader approach by many in this room to keep our youth in the state through participation in technology we've created, and within industries, Maine is poised to become a world leader.

I am a Union Ironworker; I was born in Farmington, Maine, and raised in Skowhegan. I have never worked in Farmington despite being a University there; however, I spent one day erecting the movie theatre in Skowhegan and a few shutdowns at the Sappi Mill. That is the extent of good-paying work I have done in Central Maine. I did, however, spend over a decade working in the Boston, Massachusetts, vicinity, where I was able to save enough to become a homeowner in Maine. With the median price of a Maine Home at 385,000 dollars, how can our friends, families, and neighbors afford to compete? On top of that, the new Mainers moving here already have remote jobs that pay well above the median Maine household income. Closing the door on an economic opportunity like offshore wind, as these bills plan to achieve, is yet another blow to blue-collar workers who find it harder and harder to stay in the communities they were raised in.

LD 226 seeks to block the development of an OSW Port on Sears Island in the Maine DOT's Transportation Parcel, delivering an intentional blow to the viability of Maine's Offshore Wind future. In Maine, we have passed legislation for a research array, an Offshore Wind Procurement Bill, and 4 out of 8 lease areas have been purchased by developers in the Gulf of Maine. Offshore wind is coming to the Gulf of Maine; LD 226 just makes it harder for Mainers to participate in the prosperity Offshore Wind will bring.

On an Island with a paved road, cell phone tower, aging stormwater features, and a jetty, LD 735 seeks to undo a decision made by the previous legislature on a specific dune located on a man-made feature on the Island. The 131st Legislature used this specific dune to create a mitigation fund for sand dunes as well as funding it. Last year's LD 2266 put additional dune systems and more acreage into protection on Sears Island; let's not undo that!

In a State heavily reliant on importing energy and fossil fuels to produce that energy, how about not closing the door on opportunities to domesticate our energy generation and infrastructure? I urge the committee to vote ought not to pass on both LD 226 and LD 735.

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