

## **Testimony in Support of LD 1270**

*An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources*

### **Before the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology**

Maine State Legislature

April 8, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee,

My name is Dr. Abbie Yamamoto. I am the Executive Director of Portland Adult Education, the largest adult education school in Maine, which provides workforce training and college preparatory classes to almost 2,000 adults annually. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1270.

Portland Adult Education (PAE) has been providing workforce training and academic classes to motivated adults since 1848. In the past, the workforce training programs focused on entry-level jobs. However, with the influx of adults with strong training and extensive experience in various professional fields such as engineering, construction, IT, education, and the trades since the 2000s, we have found a new opportunity.

With professionals arriving with multi-year degrees—including credentials at the masters-level or higher—plus many years of professional experience, we have been able to create and provide expedited training in fields such as clean energy where the participants are out within 3-6 months ready to enter the Maine workforce in skilled fields. One such program is PAE's Clean Energy Careers program developed in collaboration with both public and private partnerships, including ReVision Energy and Portland Technical and Arts High School (PATHS–Cumberland County's CET program).

PAE's Clean Energy Careers program has already sent out 37 participants to the Maine workforce and is slated to send out 11 more by June. Our program benefits the Maine people and the Maine economy by increasing highly-skilled professionals to enter the Maine workforce at a fraction of the cost and on an expedited timeline. Continued support is critical for future programming.

This program has benefited from strong support of the Governor's Energy Office, which maintains a holistic view of Maine's energy needs and resources. While we have deep expertise in workforce training we have limited visibility and continue to be underfunded. The Governor's Energy Office has recognized this and has mitigated those effects through close collaboration, frequent communication and outreach, and active support of our program.

Elevating this office to a cabinet-level one will increase its stability, sustainability, and effectiveness, which will continue to strengthen Maine's energy field, a critical field both on the macro- and micro-level.