

**Testimony of Jake Lachance**

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor**

**Testimony In Opposition to LD 1748 “An Act to Enhance Businesses' Understanding of Labor Standards and Grow Maine's Energy Economy Through a Training Program”**

Senator Tipping, Rep. Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Jake Lachance, and I am a Government Relations Specialist for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, which advocates for a network of over 5,000 large and small businesses across the State of Maine. I am here to give testimony in opposition to LD 1587 “An Act to Enhance Businesses' Understanding of Labor Standards and Grow Maine's Energy Economy Through a Training Program”.

We appreciate and share the intent behind LD 1748—to ensure that developers of energy projects understand and comply with Maine’s labor standards. The Maine business community strongly supports fair labor practices and workforce education. However, we believe this bill creates an unnecessary regulatory framework that duplicates existing resources, introduces potentially burdensome penalties, and lacks clarity in several key areas.

**Unnecessary Regulatory Structure**

We agree with the Associated General Contractors of Maine (AGC Maine) that the goals of LD 1748 could be achieved through simpler, more collaborative means. The Maine Department of Labor (DOL) already provides publicly available guidance and has the authority to conduct enforcement and outreach efforts. Rather than establishing a new program with mandatory certification and associated penalties, we recommend that the Department continue developing and sharing concise, regularly updated fact sheets and guidance—especially tailored for developers—through its website or trade associations. This approach would be more agile in responding to frequent changes in federal and state labor standards.

**Concerns with Training Requirements and Penalties**

LD 1748 mandates a recurring training program with a mandatory certificate of completion, which must be conspicuously posted at job sites and renewed every two years. Failure to comply carries significant penalties—ranging from a minimum of \$1,000 per project to \$2,000 per aggrieved worker,



per violation, for developers lacking certification. These penalties are excessive, especially for small or mid-size developers navigating a complex and evolving regulatory environment.

We also note that LD 1748 would layer additional administrative requirements onto a sector already subject to extensive state and federal oversight. As the AGC testimony notes, the Inflation Reduction Act and related federal programs already contain apprenticeship and labor standards. Developers and contractors must frequently adapt contracts to reflect federal requirements—additional mandates at the state level may create confusion or redundancy.

### **Advisory Board and Fee Structure Raise Additional Concerns**

The bill allows the formation of a labor standards training advisory board without clear boundaries for its authority or scope. Given Maine's budget constraints, we question whether this narrowly focused program is the best use of limited state resources. Similarly, the proposed fee structure—ranging from \$250 to \$500 per certificate—raises questions about program sustainability and fairness, particularly given the lack of a defined enforcement mechanism for these funds.

### **A Collaborative Path Forward**

Rather than imposing new mandates, we encourage the Committee to consider a more collaborative and cost-effective solution. A joint letter from the Committee to the Department of Labor, urging it to expand its educational efforts within existing resources, would achieve the same purpose without creating new bureaucracy or punitive measures. Online training modules, fact sheets, and Q&A sessions with industry partners would provide developers with the tools they need—without unnecessarily burdening them with duplicative requirements.

In closing, we remain committed to working with the Department of Labor and other stakeholders to ensure that Maine's energy economy continues to grow responsibly and that all employers understand their obligations. However, LD 1748, as written, goes too far in creating a rigid and potentially punitive system where flexibility and collaboration would be more effective.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.