



February 25, 2026

Testimony in opposition to LD 2174 “An Act to Replace the Maine Waterway Development and Conservation Act with the Maine Renewable Energy and Associated Transmission Development and Conservation Act”

Good afternoon Chairs Tepler and Doudera, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. I am Jason J. Shedlock and I’m here to testify in opposition to LD 2174.

I join you as the President of Maine’s Building Trades Unions, a Regional Organizer and Secretary-Treasurer of the Laborers’ Union, Local 327, President of the Southern Maine Labor Council and Board member of the Maine AFL-CIO, among other roles in the labor movement and in the community.

I represent Mainers who build things. As a general rule, people who build things tend to be supportive of initiatives to allow for them to build more things. The Laborers’ Union as well as every one of the 19 other affiliates of Maine’s Building Trades Unions, have been at the center of permitting reform efforts at the federal level as well as in states and localities across the country. That’s why I hope the Committee will consider our reasoning for our current opposition to the approach before you.

As referenced multiple times this afternoon, this is a large and complicated issue. I appreciate my friend and Representative from South Portland’s work in raising this issue and starting the conversation - it’s important, and the very existence of this bill in starting the conversation is helpful. And this bill is exactly that - a start. Put simply, if we are going to make meaningful, thoughtful and collaborative changes in the way we build in Maine - especially as it pertains to accelerating that work, it’s going to take time to explore and address the real world outcomes of that policy and regulatory change, and the opportunities surrounding them as well. It’s going to take more time than we have in this short legislative session.

It was stated that we should make decisions that do “the greatest good for the greatest number of people, knowing there will be negative impacts for some.” This bill, as written, while doing good for some, can and must do better to ensure energy development is driven by local workers earning wages and benefits that sustain their families and their communities - that’s assuredly a

community benefit, and one that would help meet the goal of the sponsor to “go further to help members of the community.” It was stated that this is a win-win for developers and the people of Maine. I’m here to ensure those people in Maine who are supposed to win based on this legislation are Maine’s working families. Further, upon a request for clarification from the Chair to the sponsor about what “penciled out” meant in the context of a renewable energy project, we were told that “penciled out” means ensuring these projects are profitable for developers. I urge the Committee to consider how this bill helps things “pencil out” for working families. In our view, it doesn’t.

Although I have never been to Disney, I’m told that a “fast pass” to jump the line for a ride requires a not insignificant dedicated financial commitment. To me, this concept is germane here. And to me, and the tens of thousands of working Mainers I am privileged to represent, a dedicated commitment would mean establishing meaningful labor standards so that we proceed collaboratively and with all due deliberate urgency, rather than set loose a mad dash that could very well leave Maine workers and the communities they live in - behind. It is only through this commitment to workers that we can make headway towards the sponsor’s laudable win-win goal. I am ready and willing to assist the sponsor and the Committee in reaching that goal in whatever way I can.

I am happy to answer any questions that the Committee might have. Thank you.

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