

Testimony of Mike Williams,  
Before the Labor and Housing Committee, in regards to  
*LD 1818: An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects*  
May 9, 2023

Chairs Tipping and Roeder and fellow members of the Labor and Housing Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Mike Williams. I live in Maine, and I am a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. I've spent my professional life trying to help forge the intersection between good, union jobs and action on climate change. I've spent a number of those years specifically working on offshore wind... notably to help get policies passed and the subsequent projects built so that we can start getting steel in the water... and done so by the hands of the women and men that have a fair say on the job and bring home a family sustaining wage.

I'm so pleased to testify before you today regarding L.D. 1818. A vibrant port and offshore wind terminal is critical to the success of a budding offshore wind industry, and it's critical that the work done building, operating, and maintaining that port is done by skilled women and men.

President Biden says again and again that when he thinks of fighting climate change, he thinks of jobs. He almost always goes one step further, and says that he thinks of good, union jobs. And this isn't just rhetoric. Throughout his Administration, there are efforts to ensure that the jobs created by the major investments and programs underway are—in fact—good, union jobs. This can be seen in the Administration's [Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#)<sup>1</sup>, which most notably includes the section on investment in our nation's ports—namely the nearly \$17b available specifically for ports and waterways. In fact, its right there in the first paragraph of the Guidebook, where it says that the investments in infrastructure from his Administration will “drive the creation of good paying, union jobs with high labor standards that can be accessed by all workers.”

It is clearly shown in not just announcements and initial guidelines, but in the [actual preferences](#)<sup>2</sup> put out by the federal Department of Transportation, which not coincidentally will oversee the distribution of funding for port development. For example, in one of the earliest funding announcements, the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the RAISE grants included partnership with unions in the “high” category in multiple sections of its selection criteria. It also explicitly called out project labor agreements as strong evidence of partnership with unions.

I say all of this because the bill before you today includes strong, clear language to ensure high quality job creation. Language that supports Project Labor Agreements and Labor Peace Agreements. This language is fully aligned with the intent of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as the core mission of the Biden Administration. Most importantly, it will set Maine up well to receive federal support for port development. In fact, it is a relief that you folks are considering legislation like this today. The programs that support port development are competitive, and should Maine not show clear support for strong labor standards that includes PLAs and labor peace agreements, then I'd worry about whether we could compete with the many other states who have already put these job quality safeguards in place.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you may have.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/build/guidebook/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-02/RAISE%202023%20NOFO%20Amendment2.pdf>