

**Testimony from Jayme Skelton, in Support of L.D. 1818, "An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects"**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Jayme Skelton and I'm here today to speak in favor of L.D. 1818.

I am a true Mainer. I was born here in Lewiston Maine and raised in Lisbon Maine where I still live to this day. I am a proud member and apprentice of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 4, I am here today to talk to you about the offshore windmills and the importance of having them built by union labor. Right now, the demand for electricity is higher than it ever has been, and with new technology and electric vehicles the demand is only going to continue to grow. With the constant concern of greenhouse gases, what better way to supply this demand other than a green energy source like offshore wind.

As previously stated, I am a union apprentice, currently in my third year out of a four-year program. Myself along with all the other operating engineers strive to be the best of the best in the business. During the four-year union apprenticeship program we dedicate most of our time either in the classroom or in the field training with highly experienced instructors and ~~or~~ the veterans of our industry. As operating engineers, we strive to do the job the right way the first time, and most importantly the safest way possible. This allows everyone working with us and around us to go home to their families every day the same way they came into work that morning.

Along with my time spent training, I have spent much of my three years on the road traveling to Massachusetts to work on union jobs. To do this I have to make a big sacrifice. I have to leave behind my wife and two kids. While this is not what I want to do, right now I have no other choice to make a livable wage and have the great benefits and training the union has to offer.

Bringing more family-sustaining union jobs to the state of Maine will allow Mainers like me and many others to have a successful career in our home state that we love. I want nothing more than to be able to come home to my family every night. L.D. 1818, if passed, is a huge opportunity to keep Mainers working good-paying jobs in Maine.

Strong worker protections and labor standards are key to building Maine's offshore wind industry swiftly, safely, and in a way that truly benefits all Mainers.

Building a port for Maine's offshore wind power with strong worker protections and benefits will create good jobs for local working families and a prosperous economy that works for all of us.

Thank you very much and please vote ought to pass on LD 1818.