

Testimony from Gary Serje, 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 Gary Serje and I'm here today to speak in favor of LD 1818. I'm a 2nd year apprentice, proud member of IBEW 1253, and I live with my partner and step-son in Pittsfield, Maine.

From a young age my parents instilled in me that we must strive to be better in everything we do. In our jobs, our surroundings, but most of all in ourselves. The goal of our lives is to always provide something better. Since I've entered the apprenticeship I've worked on solar projects in Farmington, Orono, Waterville, Monmouth, Augusta, and even my hometown of Pittsfield, and I can tell you there's always a strong sense of unity.

Working together with my union brothers and sisters we strive to make blueprints a reality, troubleshoot any hiccups that come along the way, make sure every strut LBD is leveled and labeled. Why? Because there's a sense of pride that comes with our job. I can attest that I've left my initials on every site I've worked on. As a testament to what my union members and I have accomplished together.

Being an apprentice means every day is a new opportunity to learn and bond with your fellow union members. Our band of brothers, if you will, are trained by experienced journeymen. This means so much to me because everyone in the program is given the knowledge and tools for themselves, but also for the next generation. I've learned so much from so many, like an endless river of encouragement and hope.

Together we learn from our mistakes, are guided through our curiosity, and protect one another. I suffer from Multiple Sclerosis, yet my family as well as myself are assured that someone is making sure that I am safe and am able to finish the task at hand. This bill provides an opportunity to leave the world better for our kids, a symbol of what can be gained if we work together and share a common goal. Offshore wind can be the foundation for a better Maine and a better world for the generations to come.

Thank you very much for your time, and please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1818.