

Testimony of the Maine Labor Climate Council in favor of the Sponsor's Amendment to LD 373

Senator Tipping, Rep. Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Scott Cuddy and I'm the Director of Policy for the Maine Labor Climate Council (MLCC). I live in Winterport.

The MLCC is a coalition of 16 public and private sector unions comprised of thousands of members across the state. We are dedicated to fighting the twin crises of Climate Change and Income Inequality at the same time.

I'm happy to be here in support of the Sponsor's Amendment to LD 373. As you all know, Maine is in the midst of receiving and spending a once-in-a-lifetime amount of federal money from IIJA and IRA to transform our climate, energy, broadband, and other physical infrastructure. The bill seeks to ensure that when the State of Maine engages in leasing state lands for clean energy development, installs or enhances broadband internet access using public funds, or contracts for public transit, that those funds deliver results in the fastest, safest, and most efficient way by ensuring that there will not be disruption of the work by labor unrest.

The state of Maine has an expressed interest in seeing these three areas of our economy running smoothly. Governor Mills has set the goal of getting every Mainer who wants high-speed internet connected by the end of **this year**. Maine's ambitious climate goals include using 80% renewable power by 2030 and 100% by 2050. Maine's award winning climate plan, *Maine Won't Wait*, establishes reducing emissions from vehicles as one of the four most important things we can do, and specifically lists increasing state spending on public transit to the national median of \$5 per capita by the end of this year, that's roughly \$6,500,000.

All of this means that we cannot afford to have disruptions in the roll out of any of these programs. By adopting labor harmony as the law where the state participates in these areas through leases, contracts, or grants we can assure that we won't have labor stoppages caused by the employees OR the employer.

The bill takes an intentionally limited position on whom labor harmony should apply too, as well. It exempts construction workers from projects on state leased lands, simply because there are labor standards currently in place for most of those projects, and doesn't apply to any state spending, contracts, or leasing that isn't specifically named in the bill.

I've found that whether or not other jurisdictions are engaging in similar practices is always of interest to lawmakers. In terms of labor harmony agreements, I can say that there are a number of them in statute or ordinance. To name a few: New York, New Jersey, Maryland, California, Miami-Dade County in Florida, the cities of Chicago and New York and others all have laws on the books requiring labor harmony in different areas of their economies, including emerging clean energy industries like offshore wind. Notably, the federal IRA and IIJA recognize the critical link between a well-trained workforce and labor harmony agreements that secure uninterrupted flows of work, including in critical sectors like public transit and clean energy development. Since the IRA and IIJA give considerable latitude to states to implement the labor

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standards of these landmark bills, this bill provides both clarity and continuity with existing law-- not only with federal law but also with the bill that Maine passed last year banning the ability of employers to hold mandatory captive audience meetings during union organizing drives.

The three areas of the economy that will be affected by this bill are central to our fight against climate change, will bring hundreds of millions of dollars of investment to Maine, and cannot wait. Perhaps most significantly, many of these markets and sectors touched by the IRA and IIJA simply would not exist without the federal and state governments' substantial subsidies in the form of grants, contracts, and land leases – because of this it's essential that the state get a fair, uninterrupted and reliable return on its investment. We need to ensure nothing slows our goals of connecting every citizen to high quality broadband, creating the clean energy future we and our world needs, and creating the efficient infrastructure our future demands. Thank you for your attention to this and please vote Ought to Pass as Amended on LD 373.