

Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Julie Dawkins, I am the Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2327. I live in Gray, Maine. I'm here today to speak in favor of LD 373.

I represent telecom workers at both Consolidated Communications of Northern New England, and Consolidated Communications of Maine. I'm excited to work in an industry that is part of this, in my opinion, once in a lifetime investment in Maine's infrastructure. Specifically, the BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment) money that will bring endless opportunities for citizens that are unserved or underserved.

When the government makes the commitment to invest money into our communities, there must be a guarantee that it will generate long-term sustainable jobs so that these communities will thrive for many years. Most companies do not have the additional manpower to satisfy the immediate demands that come with projects like this and the need to hire contractors become a necessity. Unfortunately, all too often we see out-of-state, irresponsible, unsafe, and nonunion contractors win bids just to turn a quick profit. I have witnessed contractors abandoning jobs to chase storms or escape the cold weather. This is not good for Maine, in fact it causes huge delays, unsafe conditions and none of the money remains to fuel our economy.

As a Business Manager part of my duties is to negotiate contract language that ensures a living wage, benefits such as medical coverage, and most importantly they demand a mutual commitment to safety practices. All our contracts contain "No Strike" clauses which bring peace to both the Company and its employees.

If LD 373 becomes law, it would help stop this from happening. Contractors would know that by bidding on the work they are agreeing to Labor Harmony. I'm optimistic this will lead to hiring local Maine people, safer working conditions, more qualified workers, and a commitment to finishing the work on time.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address these crucial issues today. I urge all of you to vote "Ought to Pass as Amended" on LD 373.