

HOSPITALITY
MAINE



45 Melville St. Augusta, ME 04330
207-623-2178
www.hospitalitymaine.com

327 Water St, Hallowell, ME 04347
207-623-0363
www.mainetourism.com

Testimony of Nate Cloutier

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
March 4, 2025

Neither for Nor Against LD 66, *"An Act to Expand Access to the Maine Wage Assurance Fund"*

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Labor Committee, my name is Nate Cloutier, and I am here today on behalf of HospitalityMaine, representing Maine's restaurant and lodging industries. I am also testifying on behalf of the Maine Tourism Association (MTA). MTA has been promoting Maine and supporting members in every type of tourism business such as lodging, restaurants, camps, campgrounds, retail, guides, tour operators, amusements, and historical and cultural attractions for over 100 years. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment neither for nor against LD 66, *"An Act to Expand Access to the Maine Wage Assurance Fund."*

LD 66 amends the laws governing the Maine Wage Assurance Fund to increase the number of weeks for which payment may be made from 2 to 4. It also adds liquidated damages, in an amount equal to the unpaid wages, payable to the employee.

The fund is intended for cases where an employer has ceased operations with no remaining assets to cover earned wages or has filed for bankruptcy. It is a non-lapsing, revolving account capped at \$200,000.

We offer the following considerations for the committee:

- How frequently is this fund used for claim payments? Does the Maine Department of Labor anticipate an increase in claims due to this legislative change?
- We would oppose this legislation if it results in or contributes to an increase in unemployment insurance assessments paid by employers or any additional financial burdens on employers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.