



Testimony of Jason J. Shedlock in support of LD 1420

"Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Ensure a Just & Equitable Energy Transition for Maine's Workforce"

Chairs Lawrence, Sachs and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Jason J. Shedlock, I live in Portland and I'm pleased to offer my testimony in support of LD 1420. I'd like to extend special thanks to Senator Lawrence for his leadership in introducing this bill, as well as Representatives Geiger and Kessler, along with Senator Tipping for co-sponsoring it.

I stand before you in my role as President of the Maine Building Trades, Regional Organizer & Secretary-Treasurer of Local 327 of the Laborers' Union, President of the Southern Maine Labor Council, among other roles and responsibilities, all of which afford me the honor of representing tens of thousands of working Mainers.

It is those working Mainers - and the ones that will come after them - that I have in mind when I let you know how critically important it is for this state to have a comprehensive, collaborative and cogent energy transition policy that actually takes into account the human beings that we will need to meet the administration's mounting number of goals for Maine's energy future.

This committee understood this when, just over a year ago, you voted to pass LD 2077; a bill that included a very similar framework to what you have before you today. We know that in one form or another, the historically solid middle-class careers - with fair pay and good benefits like healthcare and retirement - of Maine's carbon-based energy economy will continue to give way to the move towards electrification, and the unpredictable swings in labor standards and compensation that we've seen come with it.

We cannot be serious about reaching our energy goals if we don't get serious about the way we treat the Mainers who will be expected to help us meet them. We cannot lament an alleged workforce shortage while at the same time only pay attention to job quality and working conditions when we are forced to do so by the people who write the checks that fund the projects.

But you knew this last year, and you acted decisively. Then, it was labor, along with our allies in the environmental movement and the energy industry, that formulated a solution that has largely informed what's before you today. I am encouraged by the priority that has been placed on a just and equitable energy transition by many in the legislature this session - including the thoughtful efforts made by members of this committee. I would be pleased to work with the committee between now and the work session to ensure this bill is best informed by those efforts and ideas.

We're told that "Maine Won't Wait." So naturally I would have hoped that the language before you, or a version of it, would have been prioritized as a part of the administration's legislative agenda for this session (especially as we stand up a new Department to expand our efforts). It wasn't. So yet again we turn to this Committee to offer a pathway forward.

I urge the Committee to pass LD 1420.

