



Testimony of Jason J. Shedlock in support of LD 1748

**"An Act to Enhance Businesses' Understanding of
Labor Standards and Grow Maine's Energy
Economy Through a Training Program"**

Chairs Tipping, Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor, my name is Jason J. Shedlock, I live in Portland and I'm pleased to offer my testimony in support of LD 1748. I'd like to extend special thanks to Representative Beck for his leadership in introducing this bill, as well as Chairs Tipping and Roeder and Representatives Geiger, Macias, Skold and Archer for co-sponsoring it.

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

Perhaps contrary to some assumptions, the worker-employer relationship need not always be an adversarial one. Success for our contracting partners means more work for our members. And without skilled, dedicated, safe and efficient workers, success for those same contractors lies far out of reach. While this committee well knows that we may - and certainly do at times - differ on the ways to achieve that success, when contractors and the organizations that represent them raise a concern that impacts both employers and employees, any good labor leader will always listen. That's exactly what we did, and what's before you today is our attempt to mitigate those concerns.

As always, Representative Beck used half the words that I would in explaining this bill - and was twice as effective. I won't go over those points again, though of course I can offer my thoughts if you have any questions on the specifics. What I will explore a bit deeper is how this bill came about and why I think it's a simple yet important tool for workers, contractors and developers alike.

The AGC's Kelly Flagg has been raising this issue for at least a year. I would know, as she and I often find ourselves on the same committees and in the same meetings across the state - Kelly representing contractors while I represent workers. One of those instances, in this case at the Maine Department of Labor's Maine Apprenticeship Summit, stands out in particular as it received an overwhelmingly positive response. She spoke about contractors' and subcontractors' lack of clarity on labor standards, expectations and benchmarks on energy products. I understand those standards and requirements well, as I have been fortunate to have been involved in helping craft most - if not all - of them over the last ten-plus years. Ms. Flagg reported that construction firms would benefit from a more clear direction from the project developers that hire them; having suggested that a training on these requirements tailored to the development community may be a pathway to mutual understanding and benefit.

Sometimes Ms. Flagg and I disagree. Most times it's respectfully. But this time, I feel that at least in principle, we are in accord. The Committee, the legislature, and the executive branch should take note!



I agree because any time we can mitigate ambiguity on the jobsite, we should. This benefits workers with regard to the quality of jobs, and safety on those jobsites. It benefits the contractors as I truly believe that a majority of them do not set out to run afoul of Maine law, rule and regulation. It benefits the development community as it serves as an efficient one stop shop to get the information they need right from the objective source. It also helps them make the most informed decisions possible when selecting the contractors they do business with.

The goal of the bill before you is to get the right information to the right people so the right decisions can be made. Reasonable minds can differ on the details. I look forward to working with the entirety of the contracting community, the developers who invest both private and public funds to build and grow Maine, and the governmental entities responsible for both enforcement as well as critical technical assistance and guidance.

I urge the Committee to pass LD 1748.