



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Matthew Beck

9 Stone Drive
South Portland, ME 04106
Matthew.Beck@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Rep. Matthew Beck introducing
**LD 1748, An Act to Enhance Businesses' Understanding of
Labor Standards and Grow Maine's Energy Economy
Through a Training Program**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor

Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and my distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Matthew Beck, and I have the privilege of representing the people of House District 122, part of South Portland.

I am here today to introduce **LD 1748, An Act to Enhance Businesses' Understanding of Labor Standards and Grow Maine's Energy Economy Through a Training Program**.

Maine has taken significant legislative steps since 2020 to grow our renewable energy economy and try to reach the Maine Climate Council's critical environmental goals. Along with our evolving prevailing wage laws¹, and in addition to laws regarding wind and solar development, the Apprenticeship in Energy Facility Construction law² and An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development³ help to provide working people the opportunity to learn valuable skills that Maine desperately needs while providing them with safe, good-paying jobs in the process.

We have learned that some trade organizations, contractors and subcontractors have expressed concern that the various benchmarks and standards in place in Maine law aren't being effectively communicated to them by those who are hiring them to do the work. LD 1748 merely seeks to provide the people doing this important work with the training to ensure that they understand the shifting landscape in labor standards.

This training program would cover all energy projects, not exclusively renewable energy projects. It would be provided as an add-on module to the well-subscribed and very successful

¹ <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/26/title26ch15sec0.html>

² <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/26/title26sec3502.html>

³ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1464&item=5&snum=130>

Safety Works training program that already exists. Safety Works includes workplace safety training on wage and hour compliance, with a focus on state labor and workforce requirements and benchmarks related to energy projects and programs. The training would make sure they “meet or exceed labor standards, benchmarks and other necessary commitments required by the State, the Public Utilities Commission, the Maine Connectivity Authority, the University of Maine System and any other entity responsible for administering energy generation and transmission projects and programming in the State to receive preference or priority selection related to requests for proposals (RFP’s).”

There would be a modest fee of \$250 - \$500 for the issuance of a certificate of completion every two years. The certificate must be posted in a conspicuous place along with the other required notices and posters. The funds collected from this fee would be used to administer the program.

The bill also allows the Commissioner of Labor to establish an energy sector labor standards training advisory board to inform and assist with the development and administration of the training program.

Developers failing to obtain the certificate may be fined no less than \$1,000 per project. Labor law violations committed by a developer without the completion certificate may be fined \$2,000 per aggrieved employee per violation. Labor law violations committed by a developer with the completion certificate may be fined \$500 per aggrieved employee per violation.

I sincerely believe that the overwhelming majority of developers, trade organizations, contractors and subcontractors want to follow our Maine laws on energy projects, but some may need help understanding how things have evolved in recent years.

I urge you to support LD 1748 so that contractors understand the rules, regulations and laws we are asking them to follow. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.