



Written Testimony of Michael Higgins Staff Representative
for the
Joint Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee Hearing on LD 1792, an Act Regarding the
Energy Policy of the State
on
May 15, 2025

Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony on behalf of the United Steelworkers (USW) District 4 members in Maine regarding LD 1792, an Act Regarding the Energy Policy of the State. Our union urges you to support this legislation.

USW is the largest industrial union in North America. Nationally, our members supply almost every sector of the economy and produce a wide array of products, including paper, glass, ceramics, cement, chemicals, aluminum, oil, rubber, and steel. They do so in some of the most advanced and efficient facilities in the world, and their jobs are the sort of strong, family-supporting jobs that built the middle class in this country. These are the good paying jobs that must be retained and created in Maine.

In Maine, USW has over 2,500 members, ninety percent of whom are employed in the paper industry. Once a thriving industry with sixteen active mills, large manufacturing facilities have struggled recently due to rising energy costs, forcing drastic consolidation and facility closures over the past few decades. Maine now has only six paper mills, two of which have elected to purchase power directly from Canada in order to reduce electricity costs. More recently, Maine lost Pixelle Paper in Jay and Dragon Products in Thomaston due to rising energy costs. These are the businesses that Maine cannot afford to continue driving out of the state.

Access to affordable electricity is critical to the companies' success. As electricity prices continue to rise, the manufacturers will be forced to consolidate their workforces, or worse, entirely shutter the few remaining facilities in Maine and move to locations with cheaper electricity. USW is greatly concerned with decisions that unnecessarily raise the costs for manufacturers. The situation is dire, and the pattern is clear: rising energy costs in Maine are killing Maine jobs.

This legislation would resolve many concerns surrounding the allocation of stranded costs, create a more equitable longer-term solution, and create job stability throughout the state. Supporting this legislation is critical to keep energy affordable for manufacturers and jobs secure in Maine.

Therefore, USW strongly supports LD 1792 in order to retain good-paying, family-sustaining, manufacturing jobs in Maine. Thank you again for holding this hearing.

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