

Maine Labor Climate Council testimony in support of LD 725

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor my name is Scott Cuddy and I'm the Director of Policy for the Maine Labor Climate Council (MLCC). The MLCC is an affiliation of 16 private and public sector unions and we seek to fight Climate Change while producing good union jobs.

We are here today to voice our support for LD 725, Resolve, Directing The Efficiency Maine Trust to Study the Quality of the Jobs it Creates in Consultation with an Advisory Group.

Maine people spend a lot of money through Efficiency Maine Trust, called the Trust in the bill, to help improve energy efficiency in Maine. When expending taxpayer or ratepayer dollars, it's important to ensure that we provide high quality jobs to the people doing the work that is vital to Mainers cutting their energy bills AND to helping Maine meeting its climate change related goals.

Currently, it's unclear to the MLCC whether the jobs being created by the programs the Trust runs are good jobs or not. While we strongly believe that there is dignity in all work, the quality of a job can vary wildly and depends on many of the factors LD 725 seeks to study. What are the wages being paid, and are there benefits like healthcare or retirement? Can an employee move up through skills training?

In looking at the Trust's annual report for 2025, the word "jobs" is mentioned 19 times. Each time, it is solely there because it's in the title of the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, or An Act To Promote Clean Energy Jobs and To Establish the Maine Climate Council, or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. There's no mention of jobs outside of it being included in the titles of those pieces of state and federal legislation. I could not find any reference to the quality of the jobs being created by the Trust's activities.

The Trust's purpose, as established in statute, doesn't require it to give any thought whatsoever to jobs and jobs quality. This doesn't change the fact that state dollars are funding projects, and there should be some metrics for the quality of the jobs created. Yet, as I mentioned a moment ago, we have no idea if the jobs being created are low-quality, high-quality, or somewhere in between.

MLCC believes that the sponsor has laid out a good method of studying this issue. While the Trust is unlikely to have all of this information on hand already, it makes sense to have the Trust conduct this study instead of an outside third party. The inclusion of an advisory group that the Trust would need to work with is also an excellent part of this bill. The group would bring different perspectives that are focused on workers, training, and job quality.

To sum up, this bill is not about putting labor standards on anything, or requiring anything more than the gathering of information so that we can make good decisions in the future. This piece of legislation is a great first step to ensure that the jobs created by the Trust's activities are high quality, family sustaining jobs. Further work will need to be done to see to it that the mission of the Trust reflects the values of a good days pay for a good days work.