

Budget Recommendation BETR Program

Good morning, Senators, Representatives and Members of both the joint standing committee on appropriations and financial affairs and the joint standing committee on taxation. My name is Justin Shaw, President of USW local 9 at the Sappi Somerset Mill in Skowhegan. I am here today to testify in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR).

I represent approximately 480 employees at the Somerset Mill. Eliminating 50% of the tax reimbursement will negatively impact on my membership and put us at a disadvantage in competing within the market.

- Sappi is one of the few paper companies still investing in their facilities and their people.
 - Tax breaks allow the company to upgrade with changing technology
 - Invest in research and development
- Project elevate added roughly 16 USW jobs in the last year. Including 3 new DeWire lines, a new wrap line and a new paper board machine!
- Removing BETR means fewer financial resources Unions can negotiate for. Whether it be improved safety, benefits, headcount, training, or updated equipment.

I worked 12 years in construction all over the State and roughly 12 mills I used to work in no longer exist. Let's not make things harder or disadvantage our businesses that offer good pay and benefits.