



TESTIMONY of Megan Diver
Vice President
Maine Energy Marketers Association

March 31, 2021

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
In Support of LD 313**

An Act To Advance Career and Technical Education Opportunities in Maine

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennam, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Megan Diver, I am the Vice President of the Maine Energy Marketers Association (MEMA).

MEMA is a trade association composed of approximately 300-member companies and over 5,000 direct and 5,000 indirect people working in energy delivery and who service businesses delivering heating oil, biofuels, motor fuels, propane, pellets and kerosene and offering service installations on the equipment that operates these fuels. In addition, our members own and operate 70% of Maine's 1,300 convenience stores, throughout Maine and employ approximately 10,000 Maine people and sell more than 1 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel each year. Our members also sell more than 90% of all propane sold in our state every year. We provide education and training to the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, weatherization, and energy auditing trades for hundreds of Maine citizens annually through our courses at our own state of the art training facility MEMA Technical Education Center (MTEC) in Brunswick.

MTEC is a 501c3 non-profit HVAC-R technical training facility certified by the Maine State Department of Education. MTEC is owned and operated by over 300 Maine and New England member companies who help to design educational programs, donate equipment, and hire graduates from the school they themselves fund. MTEC programs and operations are overseen by an all-volunteer Education Committee comprised of business owners and professionals currently working in the industry. MTEC provides hands-on training and certification for individuals interested in working in the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration industries (HVAC-R). Currently, MTEC offers certifications and licensing preparation in oil heat, propane, natural gas, air conditioning, refrigeration, and plumbing.

On behalf of MEMA and our members, we ask you to support LD 313. Maine is faced with a workforce shortage across all sectors and regions, by 2025 Maine will need approximately 158,000 more workers than exist here today. For a state facing an enormous workforce shortage we need to establish alternative pathways for our future workforce that ultimately lead to an increase of workers into the

workforce earning a pay check and helping our local businesses thrive. There is a growing need for skilled workers in Maine and employers have indicated that there is an increasing need for well-trained and well-educated employees. Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions are a great way for students to learn both hard and soft skills. CTE schools, once known as vocational training, have shed some of the stigma that they once had, thanks in part to growth of the fields in communications, health care and engineering. CTE programs also have created clearer connections between skills training and continued postsecondary education. To continue to shed the stigma, to increase the growing number of CTE students and continue to interest students in CTE programs MEMA believes this legislation is a step in the right direction to help train workers and meet the state's demand for a skilled workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you our support for LD 313, we urge the Committee to vote in favor of this bill.