



International Brotherhood Electrical Workers

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LD 1979

An Act To Sustain Good-paying Jobs in the Forest Products Industry by Ensuring Consistency between Comprehensive River Resource Management Plans and State Water Quality Standards

Public Hearing - February 28, 2022

Testimony from Matthew Beck, IBEW Local #1837

Good morning, Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Matthew Beck. I'm a Business Representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union #1837 and I'm here to speak in favor of LD 1979. We're proud to represent 1,000 workers in Maine, including more than 30 dedicated employees of Brookfield Renewables at various locations.

As Maine lost thousands of good-paying Union jobs in manufacturing, those jobs that allowed people to buy a home, raise a family and have enough financial security to retire with dignity became harder to find. Any steps that may be taken to remove dams will have unintended consequences that will be difficult to reverse and should be carefully considered. If the dams go away, many of those good jobs will go away, too. As was the case with shuttered factories and mills, those workers, our members as well as workers at Sappi and in neighboring communities, are unlikely to ever find jobs with the wages and benefits that they have now. These are people's careers and livelihoods, in some families that go back two or three generations, working on the rivers of Maine.

Our members are dedicated to being good stewards of Maine rivers like the Kennebec and helping to maintain all the recreational opportunities those rivers provide to Maine people. They're also proud to help produce clean, renewable energy for our state. As you know, Maine's Plan for Climate Action calls for a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 80% by 2050. The carbon-neutral energy generated by these dams will make an important contribution toward reaching those goals.

LD 1979 will add greater clarity and legislative oversight to the regulatory process that will determine the continued operations of the lower Kennebec dams and help balance the protection of Maine's environment with the interests of Maine workers. We urge you to support this bill.

Thank you.

Matthew Beck
Business Representative, IBEW Local Union #1837