



## **Testimony of Matt Marks in Support of LD 1350**

*An Act To Expand Maine's Clean Energy Economy*

April 20, 2021 10:00 AM

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

Good Morning Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology. My name is Matt Marks; I am a Scarborough resident representing the Associated General Contractors of Maine today.

Energy development in Maine is creating and sustaining construction careers in growing renewable energy markets. Similar to the investment made here following the last great recession, primarily in wind and transmission/delivery projects, the continued efforts to build renewable generation in Maine have a significant impact on our skilled workforce and Maine-based companies.

We are fortunate that Maine has embraced our energy goals by building here. While many construction markets failed during the great recession, Maine's energy market grew and allowed for substantial skill development and investment in the equipment necessary to build facilities. In the November 2020 report, "Strengthening Maine's Clean Energy Economy" by the Governor's Energy Office and the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, 14,000 jobs exist in Maine's clean energy sector. 37% of firms were hiring between 2018-2019, and we believe that growth has continued because of the investment within Maine's renewable portfolio.

As Maine's climate goal deadlines inch closer, the investment must continue. Maine-based contractors continue to build their skilled workforce with a combination of education and training that co-exists between our state's Community Colleges, private training, apprenticeships, and on-the-job learning. While not related to this bill, we are keenly aware of initiatives that could restrict bidders into our market. That's why AGC Maine believes that both union and non-union shops should continue to work alongside each other, and the bid process remains fair and open.

Solar career growth is five times faster than the overall growth in our country. Maine's significant investment will introduce a career in trades to aspiring contractors who can also be cross-trained for other construction markets. When the pandemic struck, we were fortunate to have a strong economy even though we were still recovering from the recession. Last year the industry crested 30,000 skilled workers in the field. While those numbers have remained stable in recent months, we remain concerned about the future impacts of any decline of investments in sectors such as hospitality and retail. Introducing new skilled workers to construction throughout the construction of renewables will provide so many long-lasting careers long after we've met our goals.

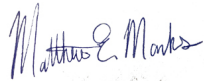
It's challenging to demonstrate the real impact renewable generation has on Maine's marketplace. Maine contractors are applying the skills learned and equipment purchased in other areas of the United States. While we are most excited by the continued investment here on our land, where we control the destiny of our energy future, it is also invigorating to learn that Maine-based firms will continue to expand their reach beyond our borders.

In addition to the direct economic benefits of employing Maine contractors, the material and service providers will recognize substantial gains by continued investment. Typically we estimate that construction investments in Maine result in 1/3 of on-site construction, 1/6 are indirectly supplying materials and services, and 1/2 of the jobs would be induced jobs created when the construction and supplier workers and owners spend their additional incomes. Of course, Maine-based generation also provides revenue for state and local taxes.

I want to thank the Sponsors of this bill and the current and former members of this Committee who recognized the environmental benefit, career growth, and financial security we gain by investing here in Maine. Combining our clean energy economy with the skills of a “traditional” construction workforce is building a stronger future for Maine.

We urge support for this bill, and we are happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew E. Marks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matt Marks, AGC Maine