

Jason Shedlock
Laborers' International Union

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Good afternoon Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. I am Jason J. Shedlock and I am a Regional Organizer for the Laborers' International Union of North America. I am also a Trustee and Executive Board Member of both the Maine AFL-CIO and the Southern Maine Labor Council and a resident of South Portland. I also serve on the Maine Apprenticeship Council as well as the State Workforce Board. I appear before with the current position of "neither for nor against" LD 336, "An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry."

The Laborers' union has a long record of being supportive of offshore wind projects around the country. I want to thank Senator Lawrence for his leadership in moving this bill forward, as we know that offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine is a critical component of Maine's energy future. While the Laborers' are an "all of the above" energy union, we know that we must be nimble to meet the energy needs of Mainers now and into the future. LD 336 is a critical step in positioning Maine to be a leader in that process.

As a representative of working families, I must state that any legislation that builds in the Gulf of Maine must, without fail, include strong labor standards moving forward. While LD 336 as currently presented does not include such standards, it is our understanding that Senator Lawrence intends to present an amendment for the workshop to address this critical issue.

The Laborers' union looks forward to being supportive of an amended version of LD 336 that includes a comprehensive Project Labor Agreement clause. Through PLAs, by partnering with building trades unions such as the Laborers, we ensure that workers are paid fairly, trained well, earn health care benefits, and, after an honest career, have an even shot at retiring with dignity. PLAs incorporate registered apprenticeship programs so that we are training Maine's future builders. They also can include targets for traditionally-underserved populations such as women and people of color. There are also programs for returning veterans. Open to any contractor who is willing to meet fair labor standards (and why would they not?), PLAs are crafted in partnership with contractors and labor organizations to fit the needs of the specific project and the specific community.

We look forward to working with Senator Lawrence, the Committee and others who are dedicated to make this project a reality while ensuring Maine's working families benefit through strong labor standards under a Project Labor Agreement.

I'm happy to answer any questions you might have and am available to work with the Committee during their work session to ensure we have the strongest bill possible for Maine's working families and Maine's environment.

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