



AGC MAINE

THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Matt Marks Against LD 2077
An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Matthew Marks, I am a Principal at Cornerstone Government Affairs, a resident of Scarborough, and sending this on behalf of my client The Associated General Contractors of Maine.

AGC Maine is a statewide commercial construction trade association and a Chapter of AGC America which was founded in 1918 with 27,000 contractors, suppliers, and service providers nationwide.

AGC Maine urges the Committee to reject the bill as written. Stopping the expansion of natural gas, especially as consumers explore energy choices, is shortsighted. Anchor customers often spur the availability of gas to residential and small business customers who take advantage of the constant delivery of the energy source and special financing to convert equipment.

In our experience gas utility providers are thoughtful about their approach to expansion. Delivering energy to customers through a pipeline reduces transportation costs, provides reliable continuous fuel, and reduces the need for costly over-the-road transportation provided by other resources.

While AGC Maine has supported renewable generation built here, we've always been clear that Maine should continue to offer a diversity of resources. Our state is still moving towards more renewable generation, but we mustn't reduce options while working towards the statutory goals. Additionally, it's clear that renewable generation has encountered various development barriers. Creating a self-inflicted shortfall of potential energy distributed in Maine places additional risks on consumers.

When natural gas expansion occurs, a deliberative process by regulators and providers ensures that the additional service areas are sensible and cost-efficient.

Maine contractors bid new construction work to install gas pipelines and distribution systems along with contracts to maintain those systems. These projects involve a diverse portfolio of subcontractors and specialty contractors in the industry.

I encourage the Committee to consider the implications of this measure and reject this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.