



May 12, 2021

**Testimony of Bruce C. Damon**

**in Opposition to LD 1691** *An Act To Require Licensing for Certain Mechanical Trades*

Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business  
May 13, 2021 9:30 AM

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business

My name is Bruce Damon. I am a resident of Lewiston and I am here today to testify against LD 1691.

I have owned and operated an HVAC / Plumbing company since 1977 located in Auburn. I currently serve on the Lewiston School Committee and have been on numerous local boards.

We currently employ 35 highly skilled technicians in multiple trades that would be affected by this new regulation. Many of our people already hold other State mandated licensure. Including Plumbing, Propane and Natural Gas, Oil burner. Federal EPA. 508 and others.

Adding the burden of these new Licenses will not improve the public safety or performance of any of these employees. We already have a shortage of manpower in Maine and this will create more barriers to new employees and create and exacerbate a solution to a nonexistent problem. 30 years ago when the VTI system was converted to the Community College System many of the trade programs that trained these very workers were scrapped, and most have not been replaced. There is insufficient capacity today to begin to fill the needs of our industry and gearing up to fill the needs outlined in this legislation will take years and cost huge sums of scarce dollars. In the last couple of years, the office of Professional regulation has eliminated several levels of licensure described here due to cost and lack of staffing. This would add hundreds of new requirements to their work load.

As we emerge from the Pandemic we need to entice more people to look at the trades as a career opportunity. This bill will do just the opposite. Please help us put Mainers back to work in Maine. Construction is a vital part of our economy.

I want to thank the Members of the Committee for considering my comments.

If you have questions, please contact me directly

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