



TESTIMONY of Megan Diver  
Vice President  
Maine Energy Marketers Association

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business  
In Opposition to LD 1691**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee, my name is Megan Diver, I am the Vice President of the Maine Energy Marketers Association (MEMA).

MEMA is a trade association composed of approximately 300-member companies and over 5,000 direct and 5,000 indirect people working in energy delivery and servicing businesses delivering heating oil, biofuels, motor fuels, propane, pellets and kerosene and offering service and installations on the equipment that operates these fuels. In addition, our members own and operate 70% of Maine's 1,300 convenience stores, throughout Maine and employ approximately 10,000 Maine people and sell more than 1 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel each year. Our members also sell more than 90% of all the propane sold in our state every year. We provide education and training to the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, weatherization, and energy auditing trades for hundreds of Maine citizens annually through our courses at our own state of the art training facility MEMA Technical Education Center (MTEC) in Brunswick.

On behalf of MEMA's membership, we share our opposition and concerns about this bill for a number of reason. This bill, as drafted, traps people in apprentice positions much longer then should be necessary, what would be a one-to-two-year program to a five. It would take 15 years for an ambitious candidate to own and operate their own business. Each and every person learns at a different pace and to handicap each person to the same standard is not beneficial to the state of Maine, especially in the trades, where there is a shortage across all sectors.

Maine has come a long way in the past few years eliminating the stigma around the trades and career and technical education. This will discourage young people from entering the trades and reverse all the good that has been done. By splitting these trades, the bill will be limiting trades people from getting proficient in several areas.

Now is not the time to add barriers to entry level professions. With education-attainment levels rising and trade skills and technology constantly evolving in the modern economy, there is an increasing need for well-trained and well-educated employees.

Maine is faced with a workforce shortage across all sectors and regions; by 2025 Maine will need approximately 158,000 more workers than exist here today. For a state facing an enormous workforce shortage, we need to establish alternative pathways for our future workforce that ultimately lead to an increase of workers into the workforce earning a paycheck and helping our local businesses thrive, not create more barriers.

On behalf of MEMA and the members we represent I would ask that you vote ought not to pass on LD 1691.

Thank you.