

Testimony of Beth White
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

**In Support of LD 1407, An Act to Direct the Board of Occupational Safety and Health to
Develop Indoor Air Quality Standards for Buildings in the State in Which Public Sector
Workers Work, Sponsored by Representative Karen Montell**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
1pm Tuesday, April 8, 2025, Cross Office Building Room 202 and Electronically

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee on Labor, I'm Beth White, Director of Politics and Legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. We are a labor union representing over 13,000 Maine workers, including public sector workers in all three branches of Maine State Government. We're here today in support of LD 1407, which would direct the Department of Labor, Board of Occupational Safety and Health, to adopt routine technical rules creating indoor air quality standards for buildings in which public sector workers work.

The State of Maine is filled with older buildings that have been in decline for many years, and many of these buildings pose potential risks for both the public who visit them and the public sector employees who work there, and the public who visit them. Many of the people who access these buildings have no idea about the health risks they might face due to radon, mold, asbestos and other contaminants. We strongly believe that no one should face undue health risks at work. We also strongly believe that passing LD 1407 would help ensure better health and safety for our members and all Mainers.

Our members have been raising concerns about safe and unhealthy working conditions in publicly owned and publicly leased buildings for years. During the 129th legislative session, we worked with former Representative Thom Harnett to introduce [LD 1969](#), An Act to Protect State Workers from Exposure to Carcinogens, which proposed that the State be required to collect and catalog data relating to abatement and contaminant testing within public buildings. Unfortunately, that piece of legislation died when the Legislature adjourned in March 2020. However, during the 130th legislative session, Representative Harnett reintroduced the legislation as [LD 1042](#), An Act to Protect State Workers from Exposure to Harmful Substances, and it was signed into law on June 17, 2021.

While we are grateful and appreciative of the work that the Legislature has done in past sessions to address this issue, there is much more work to be done. Creating indoor air quality

standards for buildings where public sector workers work is another important step toward truly addressing the health risks that exist in so many of our older buildings, including the State House.

In 2020, Adam Caplan-Bricker and Tom Juravich from the UMass Amherst Labor Center released a report titled ["The Failure of Asbestos Monitoring in Maine State Buildings: The Case for the Creation of a Tracking and Monitoring System"](#) that may be helpful as you consider this legislation. I've also included links to two MSEA member testimonies from LD 1969 and one from a different bill that also addresses health impacts from contaminants in state buildings.

Please support LD 1407. Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Testimonies of MSEA Members:

Deanna Enis, <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=136187>

Mike King, <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=136188>

Cynthia Barre, <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=10021287>