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I am writing today to express my concern with LD 469. The title states it is “An Act to Ensure Safety Across Maine’s Construction Industry”, titles can be deceiving.

The text of this bill attempts to define a “Craft Worker” it would take far more than one sentence to do so. Any definition that is new should be carefully considered. Unintended consequences or hidden consequences of something that seems so simple can be stifling.

This bill seeks to apply a one size fits all safety training to all workers in construction. While there is value in safety training, that training should be targeted toward the occupational hazards specific to each trade. A blanket approach specified on a national level is not the best approach. Teaching a roofing contractor the dangers of trench safety makes the same sense in teaching the pipelayer how to properly assemble staging, none. Again, trade specific safety training is far more important.

Before passing another law that creates layers of bureaucracy and compliance tracking, I implore you to ask yourself what is the problem this bill attempts to solve?

Is there a better way to help keep construction workers safe?

What have you done to look into worker safety at the small businesses in Maine?

Have you reached out to your constituents that work at tee companies to hear their stories or have you relied on summary reports from other legislators or academics?

In nearly 3 decades in this business not one legislator has ever contacted someone at our business to seek our opinion on these proposals. I understand that isn’t realistic. But if you are going to propose laws to “protect” us, you should at least ask our opinion or heed the advice of our industry groups and representatives.

My point is, adding layers of difficulty, paperwork, and reports never made a single person safer. Safety is a culture. Mandatory training is not a substitute for that safety culture. Knowing that you have the right and responsibility to be safe and to look out for others will always outweigh mandatory training.

Utilizing the resources that this law would require in a better way makes more sense. Finding ways to promote safety and trade specific training will always do a better job if the end goal is in fact safety of those performing the task. That can be done by working with the construction industry to determine the most effective ways. This bill is not a good option. If you truly want to ensure worker safety, engage the industry not the bureaucracy.