



**Testimony of Mark Curtis in Opposition of LD 1231  
"An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects."  
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing**

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing members, my name is Mark Curtis. I am a resident of Gorham and here today to speak against this bill.

I know a lot of testimony today will share the views from a company perspective, and I thought it makes sense to share my journey, so it illustrates a personal perspective. I started my career in the construction industry directly from Gorham High School. After learning skills at the regional technical school, my first step in my career was at an engineering firm as a Computer-Aided Design (CAD) technician. In my first year, I learned computer and technical skills and joined another firm as a support and repair technician.

Building on my technical skills, I jumped at an opportunity to join a local site contractor Gorham Sand & Gravel, in 1994, just a few years after graduating. Working with their team and the company owners, I quickly learned more about company operations, including finance, estimating, and staffing. It was an opportunity for me to grow professionally, and the company supported those efforts by providing the training and listening to ideas from all team members that improved operations.

I've remained at Gorham Sand & Gravel for 27 years! During that time, I've had the chance to tackle some planned and unplanned challenges, but we always do that as a team, similar to a large family. I like the business model that allows me to grow within the same organization and try many different tasks along the way. It helped my career flourish, and I don't know if that same path would have been possible and as enjoyable in a labor union. For instance, I work all year with the same team. We share in our successes and even our failures, but we have each other's backs. The owners are not only accessible, they work alongside us. When I hear career

pathways and on-the-job learning, I can't think of a better way than hands-on education. That's the reason I'm sharing my story. The idea that non-union construction firms don't support growth is inaccurate.

It's really hard to explain or even show how fortunate many craft workers are in Maine to learn by working alongside a seasoned skilled worker. During my time in the industry, it's been amazing to watch local high school students join our team and build their lives. I serve on the Advisory Committees for Westbrook Regional Vocational Center and Southern Maine Community College for Heavy Equipment Operations. Both programs are integral to the industry and produce a combination of classroom and field training. But their education doesn't stop there. We continue that in the field with our experienced supervisors guiding their progress.

That brings me to safety and the commitment both the employer and employee have to make sure everyone goes home. When I joined Gorham Sand & Gravel, we designed a safety program for training and accident prevention. Our insurance carrier has recognized us for that effort and the results.

Gorham Sand & Gravel's founding owners started the company after working with their family on their farm and their brother's excavation firm. They have been operating equipment since they were very young. You can imagine after 30 years moving dirt and building everything from water facilities to building roads, they've seen just about everything. With nearly 100 employees, the entire company benefits from direct contact with the leadership team. This experience and contact is invaluable to a young person in our industry. This bill is aimed at companies like ours, and I don't think that's fair.

I tell you this because I enjoy the culture of a company classified by many as an "open shop." But that term doesn't represent us. We are a hard-working family business where you can start and build your career for a lifetime. Forcing a project labor agreement will lock us out of the projects and support large companies located in Massachusetts or Connecticut.

Non-union Maine firms who pay taxes, support infrastructure improvements in our state, and have the skill and ability to build energy infrastructure will be unable to apply their crafts in their own home state if you pass this bill. More importantly, we don't just give back to our communities with taxes, we serve them by donating our time and resources. Gorham has some of the best outdoor trails in the state, we are proud to have donated materials, labor, and machine time to help. We help with other athletic fields, the snowmobile trails, non-profit fundraisers, the list goes

on. We are invested in our communities. Our people donate their time to causes they are passionate about. Passing a law to dictate that Union only contractors are required on particular jobs will be detrimental to many different aspects of life in Maine.

Please vote against this bill and protect Maine's skilled workers.