

Testimony of
Ben Gilman of the
Maine State Chamber of Commerce
In Opposition To
LD 1231, An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects

April 9, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Ben Gilman, I am from Gorham and I represent the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business association that represents a network of 5,000 businesses, large and small across Maine, and we are here to provide you with our testimony in opposition to **L.D. 1231**, An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects.

Governor Mills has made climate change a priority of her administration and established the Maine Climate Council which recently released its report, Maine Won't Wait. As part of this, Governor Mills has set a goal for Maine of reducing our carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce supports these reduction goals for our state. If the State of Maine is going to achieve the emissions reductions goals laid out by Governor Mills and reinforced by the findings and recommendations of the Maine Climate Council, we need everyone working together to achieve these goals. LD 1231 does the opposite – it limits who can participate in clean energy projects in the State of Maine and will make it more difficult in achieving the goals of the Climate Council. While we are ushering in a new era of energy development in Maine, if LD 1231 were to pass, it will exclude many Maine based contractors, who already have an outstanding track record in renewable energy development here in Maine, in favor of out of state contractors.

During the 129th Legislature, as a State, we updated our Renewable Portfolio Standard and put in place positive signals for solar expansion here in Maine – it was extremely well received as one can see the number of renewable energy projects currently in the development pipeline. One of the issues now facing us as a state, and not necessarily a bad one, is the need to develop the workforce to meet these workforce demands for these projects. Instead of looking at policy that will limit who can participate in the renewable energy field, which LD 1231 does, we should as a State be developing policy that looks at expanding and trying to attract more people into this field. LD 1231 takes us in the wrong direction in trying to meet the workforce demand for the renewable energy development and will have the unintended consequence of bringing in out of state workers when Maine workers don't meet the requirements outlined in LD 1231.

Climate change is real and the Maine Climate Council has done a great job in setting Maine on a path to success. LD 1210 could serve as a policy roadblock and impede the state from achieving our carbon reduction goals and we would ask the committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1231. Thank you for your time.