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**Testimony of Wayne Kiser Against LD 1231
"An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects."**

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Wayne Kiser. I am a resident of Presque Isle and here today in opposition to this bill as a small business owner.

My company, Underwood Electric, employs 30 hard-working Mainers. For the last ten years, we've completed an estimated 8 renewable energy projects. We value the investment by developers and the work generated by producing local energy built by Maine people.

If this bill passes, a significant portion of the quality work we perform will be unavailable to us. It will encourage larger firms, even those from out-of-state, to reduce the amount spent in our local community. When Underwood Electric employees are in the field, they use local vendors, spend money at local stores, and purchase goods here. When they are home, they contribute to the local economy when they spend their hard-earned paycheck.

Working in a small family business shouldn't preclude us from competing. Asking us to change our entire business model to complete the same work we do today is unacceptable. Our employees pay taxes here, they pay their electric bills that support Maine's electric generation, and they are known for quality work in the construction industry.

Underwood Electric's employees go through rigorous training and safety courses, enabling them to work on these projects. This bill would eliminate our capability of bidding state funded renewable energy projects, thus reducing competition and allowing a select few to charge higher rates to perform the same work we



are capable of doing. This results in higher completion prices for Maine's taxpayers. This bill will kill private contractors like us, and result in the loss of high paying jobs for many Maine taxpayers. Dozens of renewable energy projects have been completed in the state of Maine solely by private contractors, all of which have been done in safe and efficient manners, eliminating the need for this bill.

There is an assumption that a career, including learning the skills, may only be successful if it is an approved government program. The private sector, particularly construction, has provided thousands of lifelong careers building the infrastructure visitors and residents use in our state, proving this assumption misguided and incorrect.

This bill is an anti-small business bill. With a shrinking rural economy, it's unfair to ask residents to host generation facilities in their community but be locked out of building the facilities in their backyard. Our licensed electricians continue to develop their experience and education as dictated by the licensing authority. Adding labor practices to qualify for the work isn't a reflection of our work's quality or an indication of the employees' career pathway. Like our competitors, we take great pride in our entire team, and we support their professional growth.

We recognize that many will testify today on this bill, and we hope that you have a chance to connect with many Maine-based builders who are installing renewable energy facilities. Taking away our opportunity to compete will have a direct impact on our operations. Please vote against this bill, and support Mainers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Kiser', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wayne Kiser