

Jason Shedlock
Laborers' International Union

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Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. I am Jason J. Shedlock and I am a Regional Organizer for the Laborers' International Union of North America. I am also a Trustee and Executive Board Member of both the Maine AFL-CIO and the Southern Maine Labor Council and a resident of South Portland. I also serve on the Maine Apprenticeship Council as well as the State Workforce Board. I appear before you in support of LD 1231, "An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects." Thank you to Representative Cuddy for his leadership in introducing this legislation.

As we ensure a sustainable future for Maine's environment, so too should we ensure a sustainable future for our workforce. We do not do that by counting quantities of jobs but by fostering quality of careers. That's what LD 1231 does. And that's why the Laborers' union supports this bill.

To be clear, the women and men of my union work in every sector of the energy economy. As Maine addresses the challenges of climate change while also meeting our needs of today, Laborers and our fellow building trades members offer a pathway to a middle class life with fair wages, benefits, and an even shot to retire in dignity after an honest career. Policymakers such as members of this committee should do all they can to encourage these types of jobs, especially when public assistance through rebates, grants, loans or any other government support is involved. LD 1231 is a common sense solution to ensure that those that develop these natural resources do so while also helping develop what I'd argue is Maine's most valuable resource - our working families.

Through registered apprenticeships so that we can actually have the skilled builders of Maine's future and with prevailing wage requirements so we can actually compensate them fairly and keep Mainers working in Maine; we can be sure that our renewable energy projects are positioned for success. With a focus on traditionally underserved populations, we can ensure that our workforce looks less like, well, me, and more diverse in gender and race. And finally, but critically, with a preference-weighted system for renewable projects that emphasize project labor agreements, not only do the projects get completed on time and on budget but the economic benefits also reach the workers that build them.

The Laborers' union stands ready to meet Maine's energy needs of today and tomorrow. LD 1231 goes a long way in setting the rules of the game when it comes to workforce standards. I urge you to vote ought to pass. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Jason J. Shedlock
Regional Organizer
Laborers' International Union of North America
jshedlock@lnerof.org
(207) 317-1447

Resident: South Portland, Maine