

nick paquet
Benton

Good Morning, Senator Hickman, Representatives Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Nick Paquet and I'm married father of 4, reside in Benton ME, am a licensed JW, member of IBEW 1253. I testify in support of LD1231.

We face overlapping crises of skyrocketing economic inequality, increasing climate instability and racial injustice. These crises pose dire threats to working people, to all that we love about Maine and to our democracy.

We know that climate change is warming our oceans, raising sea levels, changing our seasons, increasing extreme weather and jeopardizing the integrity of our ecological systems. Science is very clear that we have to limit greenhouse gas emissions to avoid catastrophic impacts. Maine has shown leadership in response to the climate crisis and we know we have the potential to create thousands of new jobs and new sectors of our economy. It is urgent that our climate change response create high quality union jobs and advance equity for frontline communities. That will only happen if we are deliberate. The work of moving towards a clean energy economy must be rooted in workers' rights, economic justice and equity.

LD 1231, An Act Concerning Climate and Community Investment Projects, sponsored by Rep. Scott Cuddy, seeks to create high quality clean energy jobs and advance equity. For renewable energy projects (solar, wind, tidal, geothermal, hydro, etc) over 2.5 MW that receive over \$50,000 in assistance, the bill requires:

- Prevailing Wages:** Workers are paid prevailing wages on these projects. Prevailing wages ensure that workers are paid wages and benefits that are customary for each occupation in an industry. This guarantees that workers receive decent pay and benefits and that we encourage high road jobs.
- Registered Apprenticeships:** The use of registered apprenticeship programs on these projects. Apprenticeships ensure that workers earn while they learn the skills of a trade, that jobs translate into long term career pathways and that we build a highly skilled clean energy workforce in Maine.
- Equity in Hiring:** Employers on these renewable energy projects must develop a diverse workforce and hire people traditionally underrepresented in these jobs – Native Americans, people of color, women and veterans. Employers must also seek to hire from areas with higher rates of poverty and individuals with traditional barriers to employment.
- Encouraging Project Labor Agreements:** For any future PUC solicitations for the procurement of energy, the bill adds Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), also known as Community Workforce Agreements, as one of the factors to meet the economic benefits standard. PLAs are a project management tool that allow worker organizations and developers to come together to ensure a highly skilled workforce on a project so that it can be completed on time and under budget.

We have an opportunity here before us that are seldom in history where we can change how we produce the energy that we need in our day to day needs. Coupled with the advantages of creating a workforce for a new sector for generations to come. The opportunity to Build it Better, to Build it Back Better for us Mainers, Good Jobs for Mainers, Embracing the environment which are needed to keep our native sons and daughters here and to attract them to come here. For that to happen we need to be attractive to them and legislation such as this will help.

I have been a resident of Maine my entire life. Growing up here I have watched my family struggle with the lack of manufacturing that we use to prevail here in Maine. As they declined the wages did also as the conditions.

Being an electrician I have had the opportunity to work across this nation and just being from Maine is a statement on work ethic that seems to be born with you here. I chose to come home and raise my family here. As I think of my children the discussions that we have as they enter adulthood about careers, I have a hard time thinking that they can prosper here to get what they are worth.

Again opportunities like this don't come often, lets us (Mainers) take advantage of this not just for today but for the next generations..

Nick Paquet