



**Testimony of Dirk Gouwens, Executive Director,
Ski Maine Association**

in opposition to

LD 1279,

An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage

Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing

April 12, 2021

PO Box 7566

Portland, Maine 04112

(207) 699-3120

www.skimaine.com

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and Members of the Labor and Housing Committee:

My name is Dirk Gouwens and I am writing to you today as the Executive Director of the Ski Maine Association, a not-for-profit organization that represents the interests of the Alpine and Nordic Ski Centers in the State of Maine. Please accept this letter in opposition to LD 1279, "An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage."

Maine currently has the sixth highest minimum wage in the country, exceeded only by CO, NY, MA, WA, and CA. These states have large cities including New York, Boston, Denver, and San Francisco with extremely high living costs – costs far greater than the cost of living in Maine, especially the rural regions of the state where our ski resorts are located.

This bill would ignore the intent of the citizens initiative approved by Maine voters in 2016 that increased the minimum wage by one dollar increments until 2020 and then tied future increases to actual cost-of-living adjustments. It will put Maine employers at a significant disadvantage compared to our neighboring states of NH and VT, direct competitors to Maine ski areas.

Our current system guarantees that any increases in the minimum wage are based on actual data rather than emotions. It is a better system for employers and should stay in place as is.

We urge the members of this committee to vote ought not to pass.

Dirk Gouwens

Executive Director

dgouwens@skimaine.com

mobile (207) 653-5590