

Good Morning Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and esteemed members of the Labor and Housing committee. My name is Grant Provost, I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7, I am a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Board and I sit on three Maine State Workforce Boards. The Maine State Construction Board, The Central Maine and Western Maine Workforce Board and the Maine State Workforce Board. I am a Member of the Maine State Building and Construction Trades Council and Chair the Council's Committee on Offshore Wind. I rise in favor of LD 1656 An Act to Promote Energy-efficient Affordable Housing.

Affordable housing is a real issue for many of our friends and family here in Maine. Over the past 5 years home prices have exploded especially this last year where remote working has allowed so many who lived in major cities to relocate. Maine's affordable home stock is being gobbled up sight unseen with no inspection as crazy as that sounds, for above asking price. This is driving the cost of building materials through the roof as out of state purchasers shoot for above asking price on homes that need work. If you were to think about what your most valuable asset is, what equity you will hand down to your children, most will say their home. Homeowners can rest assured that after lifetime of paying down their mortgage the next generation will either have a home to live in for almost free or a pocket full of money from selling it. When affordable homes are scarce it doesn't just affect the families that are locked out of homeownership it effects generations.

From the standpoint of someone in the Construction Trades, the building of affordable and workplace housing should also be used as a vehicle that leads the ones who build it to a place where homeownership is a possibility. Without rules governing how our tax dollars are spent on affordable housing the cycle of generational wealth from homeownership never begins. When large scale affordable housing projects are built with Project Labor Agreements the Mainers on those construction sites are guaranteed to have good paying jobs that lead them to careers in the trades. Careers where construction workers are paid a living wage, have jobs that include health insurance and can rest easy knowing that after a long career they can enjoy the fruits of their labor in retirement. PLA's do not exclude any construction company from bidding on any project, a PLA does create a level playing field where employees are treated and paid fairly. Creating an atmosphere where companies that pay well, have fringe benefits and treat their employees well can not only succeed but strive is good for all of us in Maine union or not. When PLA's are implemented on projects we say yes to apprenticeship programs and the next generation of trades men and women right here in Maine.

This bill not only sets the bar for the construction site, it commits those who build affordable housing in Maine to building green. It creates vessel where the affordable housing we put on this planet is more in harmony with the environment we live in. I believe everyone here can agree on that being good thing. Encouraging empowering careers in the trades while protecting the beautiful State of Maine is a no brainer and something we all can get behind. As we push forward on this bill and others we unite in a collective fight handed down to us by generations of Mainers, the idea that we are here to protect this world's beauties and to make it better for those yet to come.

With LD 1656 it is important to take note of the supporters. Important to look at who is coming together to champion this needed legislation. When you do you find a coalition containing environmental groups, labor unions, public advocacy groups, affordable home developers, construction companies and legislators. That is a diverse group of supporters united in the fight to create safe affordable housing, the fight to create good paying careers with benefits, and the fight to protect our

environment. I strongly urge this committee to vote ought to pass on this welcomed piece of legislation.

Grant Provost  
Brunswick

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