



Testimony of Garrett Mason
On Behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors
In Opposition to LD 1969
An Act to Ensure Maine Citizens Benefit from Renewable Energy Generation Projects
by Establishing Job Quality and Hiring Standards

Good afternoon Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee my name is Garrett Mason. I am a resident of Lisbon and a partner at Dirigo Public Affairs. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1969 on behalf of our client the Associated Builders and Contractors of Maine.

ABC is a national trade organization that represents over 21,000 merit shop construction and construction related firms across the country. ABC's membership represents all specialties within the construction industry. Here in Maine, our chapter represents 182 members statewide, many of them are in communities that you serve. On behalf of all of our members, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Our organization believes very strongly in energy independence for Maine. We believe that it is critical for Maine people and businesses to be able to access energy at a reasonable price. It is no secret that energy prices have risen dramatically this winter, and we do not believe that LD 1969 will do anything to help this situation. In fact, it will do quite the opposite. Placing further regulations and requirements on regulators, project developers, and those they contract with will increase the cost of energy for Maine people and businesses. We fail to see how this would be a net benefit for anyone involved at any point in the construction or the delivery of energy at the end project.

While we have concerns around the entirety of LD 1969, we would like to point out some of our biggest ones in this testimony.

On January 15, 2022, the Maine DOL's Bureau of Labor Standards enacted rules governing apprenticeships in the construction of energy generation facilities. These rules were necessary after the passage of LD 1282 in 2019. We do not believe it would be beneficial to rewrite these rules when they were only finally implemented less than two months ago, because it would be a waste of department resources and would cause yet another wave of uncertainty around these projects that are coming online over the next few years.

ABC Maine is also opposed to the Project Labor Agreement provisions of the bill. According to the proposed amendment, the labor and project performance standards could be ignored if the contractor was a signatory to a PLA. Furthermore, it also requires that the PUC consider whether or not the bids received for class IA projects includes a PLA. This is a shift in policy and would apply retroactively to January 1, 2022.



By placing a PLA consideration in the bid process it would make it nearly impossible for a company who was not part of a PLA to compete for work.

PLA's would only make these projects more expensive and allocate jobs to out of state contractors. Studies show that PLA's can raise the costs of a project anywhere from 12-20%. Maine people have already seen dramatic price increases on their electricity bills. Adding more on top because of a PLA preference adds insult to injury. What's more is that this provision would also exclude nearly 90% of Maine construction workers who have chosen not to join a union.

ABC Maine shares the goals of the sponsor in that we too want to see more Mainers on jobs throughout the state. That is why ABC Maine has worked to implement an approved and accredited apprenticeship program that you can learn more about at our website, abcmaine.org. We are also proud of our many members who offer training and programs specifically designed to meet the needs of their workforce.

Maine has laid out ambitious carbon reduction goals for the first part of the 21st century. If we are to meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045, the Legislature should not be passing LD 1969. It only muddies the waters and will make that goal harder to achieve. On behalf of our membership, we ask you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1969.

Thank you for your time and we are happy to provide any resources you may need before and during the work session.