

Jason Shedlock  
Laborers' International Union and Maine Building & Construction Trades Council  
LD 1969

Good morning Senator Daughtry, 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 and President of the Maine State Building & Construction Trades Council. I am also a Trustee and Executive Board Member of both the Maine AFL-CIO and the Southern Maine Labor Council as well as serve on the Maine Apprenticeship Council and the State Workforce Board. I appear before you in support of LD 1969, "An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development." Thank you to Representative Cuddy for his steadfast leadership on behalf of Maine workers and environment.

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 hollow rhetoric or hypotheticals; we do it by putting policy where our mouth is and enacting laws that meet our clean energy and workforce development goals. And that's why I, my affiliated organizations and the thousands of working Mainers I represent support this bill.

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 1969 puts in place a common sense framework 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 current and future working families.

We applaud the Mills Administration's sharp focus on workforce development through the Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship models, as well as it's learning forward on climate change and renewable energy production. This bill operationalizes those goals in a way that makes a meaningful difference by putting in place benchmarks for job training as well as making a long-overdue investment with our traditionally-underserved populations.

I also want to be clear about something you may hear in later testimony, what this bill does not do is mandate labor agreements or union labor. It uses a tried and tested Registered Apprenticeship model to train workers, as well as simply incentivizes the use of labor agreements. So make no mistake, a company who chooses not to enter into a labor agreement or engage in meaningful job training is making a business decision - plain and simple.

I believe your role as lawmakers is to find ways to meet the renewable energy and workforce goals of our state while utilizing the policy tools you have at your disposal. LD 1969 gives you those tools. On behalf of the 300 plus members of my union and the 6,000 plus members of the 20 affiliates of the Building Trades Council that I represent, we urge you to vote ought to pass and put those tools to use.

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