



**MAINE**  
AGGREGATE ASSOCIATION

**LD-1969, “An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development”**

Good afternoon, Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Tim C. Walton, I am a resident of Livermore and I am supplying testimony today on behalf of the Maine Aggregate Association in opposition to LD-1969.

MAA is a statewide, non-profit, member-based organization representing businesses and individuals involved with the gravel and rock industries. Established in 1994, MAA has become an effective and respected voice for the industry. MAA membership includes gravel pit owners, quarry operators, aggregate processors and truckers as well as equipment dealers, banks, insurance agencies and consulting firms that serve the aggregate industry.

Actually, I should say, our testimony will be addressing the amendment released by the bill’s sponsor on Thursday of last week. Although not provided much time by standards to digest and analyze the amendment, we do have some concerns and questions about it.

Much of the bill addresses how the workforce on covered projects would be trained, specifically and exclusively imposing apprenticeship mandates. This is concerning to us. The apprenticeship model isn’t the only method of training, nor, by any means, should it be considered the industry standard. Rather it’s simply one of several educational delivery methods utilized throughout our industry.

Some companies engage structured, intense in-house training programs, while others have success with on-the-job, mentoring type programs or hire from Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and yet others use a combination of methods. With regards to training and education, we strongly believe a one-size fits all approach is never the answer. The apprenticeship training model works well for some companies, and of course organized labor, but conversely, it doesn’t make the right fit for all. We don’t believe there is any proof, or any unbiased hard data to support the notion that an apprenticeship trained workforce delivers a better end product.

We know some of you support CTE and our Community College System. By advancing this bill, you are sending the message to those students their decision for that pathway is not good enough to work on renewable energy projects in their home state. Even though their classroom hours will exceed 300 and many will work gaining experience while attending school. This bill still requires them to be an apprentice. While a company could still hire them, they would likely not be working on renewable projects. Again, this points to some notion that apprenticeship training is somehow superior to all other widely used delivery methods.

With regards to the Project Labor Agreement (PLA) language. I am not sure what else can be said. Every time a bill has come before the Maine State Legislature, either mandating a PLA be engaged or making it an incentive on bid day, our industry finds itself in a position to defend the numbers. Over 90% of Maine's construction workers "choose" not to belong to a union. Over 90%! Even with that statistical knowledge, attempts continue to be made through the legislative process, including an almost mirror bill to this one last session, that if passed would exclude this overwhelming majority of Maine's craft professionals from working in certain market sectors by creating an exclusive and artificial market-share for others. Please keep in mind, these very workers are your relatives, neighbors and friends. They have and continue to build some of the most complex, majestic projects in the State. So, as taxpayers, or in this case, ratepayers themselves, it begs the question why the State of Maine would intentionally want to keep these good Maine workers from constructing projects they help fund.

Thank you in advance for you time and consideration of our position on this matter.