

Kilton Webb
IBEW 567
LD 1969

Representative Cuddy's bill: LD 1969 "An Act Concerning Equity in Renewable Energy Projects and Workforce Development" Testimony

Monday 10:15 am

Kilton Webb Auburn Good morning, Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee; my name is Kilton Webb, and I'm a 4rd-year apprentice of The IBEW Local 567. I testify in support of LD 1969.

It was mid-summer in 2018. I had just gotten home from my general maintenance job at a local summer camp when my dad eagerly rushed over to me. "Kilt, you gotta go talk to the neighbors. Their grandson is up from Florida and talks about how he is an Apprentice with the IBEW." He knew that I had been looking into getting into a skilled trade but didn't know the best way to start. I went over to talk with him, and I knew this was the answer. The next day, I applied to join the Apprenticeship for that fall new year. I quickly realized how much I enjoyed the classes' hands-on style and the real-world applications of what we were learning from class to class. One thing was still missing; I hadn't begun working yet.

Thankfully, all changed when I got a phone call from Al Shepard, my training director, asking if I was ready and willing to work. He had an excellent job for me down in Kennebunk. The town had commissioned construction for a massive 4 Mega Watt solar field. I will always cherish the memory that was this solar project. It was not only the first project I ever worked on, but it was also a project I could believe in. It is easier to execute your work when you can believe in your work. I am in support of LD 1969.

I want to help ensure that we continue to fund green jobs like the Kennebunk Solar Field and train Maine's skilled labor. LD 1969 paints a vision of the future where these aspirations are met hand in hand. For me, the registered Apprenticeship has meant that I'm receiving a fantastic education, I'm earning while learning, and the only costs I incur each year are for my books. It's a tremendous tried and true model. That's why I support expanding apprenticeship utilization in Maine, as is included in this bill. To respond to the threat of climate change, we need to act fast. That means we need to train a generation of electricians, insulators, folks to install turbines and heat pumps, and lots more. We need to do this in a way where we ensure we build a diverse, highly trained workforce, that we pay workers good wages and benefits and that we support workers having a voice on the job. For bigger renewable projects that get public assistance, it seems reasonable to apply prevailing wages, strong training requirements and encourage equity and the development of a diverse workforce. I hope you will support LD 1969 and thank you for your time.