



Committee on Labor and Housing
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

February 6, 2024

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 373, *An Act to Improve Labor Conditions for Maine Workers / An Act to Ensure Maine Employer and Employee Harmony in Climate and Energy Jobs*

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maine Renewable Energy Association (MREA), thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to LD 373, *An Act to Improve Labor Conditions for Maine Workers*, as amended by the sponsor in an email to the Labor and Housing Committee's Interested Parties list on January 29, 2024, and re-titled *An Act to Ensure Maine Employer and Employee Harmony in Climate and Energy Jobs*. MREA is a not-for-profit association of renewable energy producers, suppliers of goods and services to those producers, and other supporters of the industry.

LD 373, as amended, would require that, if a "clean energy development project" involves a lease of State land, the State authority responsible for granting the lease must require as a condition of the lease that the lessee enter into an Employer and Employee Harmony Agreement with any labor organization representing or seeking to represent its employees at the project site. MREA understands "Harmony Agreements", in the context of clean energy development, to mean an agreement between a project owner and labor organizations in which (1) the owner agrees to maintain a neutral posture with respect to efforts by labor organizations to represent project employees, to permit labor organizations to have access to employees, and to guarantee to the labor organizations the right to obtain recognition as the exclusive collective bargaining representative of the project employees and (2) the labor organization agrees to refrain from any economic interference with the project, such as picketing or work stoppages.

LD 373, as amended, would implicate potentially many, many new renewable energy development projects, including undersea cabling crossing Maine-owned submerged lands to deliver electricity from offshore wind turbines, as well as transmission lines that may need to cross Maine's vast and scattered public forests and other lands to deliver electricity from their source to where the electricity is needed. While the bill, as amended, does not require that such

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clean energy projects be built by those with organized labor representation, MREA members are concerned that requiring, in particular, recognition of labor organizations as the exclusive collective bargaining representative of their project employees would limit the pool of contractors from which they could select employees.

In order to pursue beneficial electrification, meet our clean energy goals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reliability, and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, Maine must rapidly deploy new renewable energy generation projects and expand its transmission and distribution grid. Maine's clean energy developers must employ a broad and diverse workforce to meet this critical demand. LD 373, as amended, may limit the pool of contractors willing to do this important work. This limitation will not only slow development, but may also increase costs that are borne by Maine ratepayers. As such, MREA opposes this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eliza Donoghue".

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
Executive Director