

LD 1411 – 5-5-21 Public Hearing

An Act To Establish the Maine Buy American and Build Maine Act

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Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Members of the Committee:

I am a resident of Dresden, and am President of Machinists' Union Local S-89 which has nine individual bargaining units in Kennebec, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Androscoggin counties—six are public sector, two are non-profits with some public funding, and one is private.

I am here today to ask that you pass LD 1411. This bill gives us all an opportunity that does not present itself often—a chance to come together to champion what should be a non-controversial effort to bolster both Maine Business and Labor. Labor wants Business to thrive and be successful. We value good jobs and value employers who take pride in producing high-quality products or services, and who pay respectable wages and benefits. These employers exist in Maine and they deserve to be given a fair chance to compete for this work.

Currently, Maine employers are handicapped by competition from out-of-state and foreign companies that do not operate under the same safety standards, wage and labor laws, and environmental protection regulations. Maine employers struggle to remain profitable in the face of competition from companies that cut corners in these areas that Maine legislators and voters have already given a high priority. Failure to require our own State government to procure goods and services close to home whenever possible, is undercutting our own economy.

I often work with a variety of Maine State agencies, and it is startling to see how many State contracts have been awarded to out-of-state companies. Non-Maine workers and companies are reviewing the cases of our disabled citizens, collecting our debts, etc. As Mainers, we pride ourselves on our integrity and work ethic. We should not participate in the bleeding of our own money to outside interests; they do not invest in our local economy. Likewise, as Americans, whenever possible we should purchase goods and services that support our own national economy.

Our businesses who operate with integrity deserve to be rewarded with our contracts. Our work force deserves to have employers who pay enough to provide us with the ability to pay commuting costs, daycare, health insurance, and living expenses. We need to help employers who will re-invest in their own companies rather than stripping them of their assets and sending their money elsewhere. With this bill we have the opportunity to join together to institute targeted local economic stimulation that benefits all of us and which invests in our future. I encourage you to do the right thing for our businesses and citizens by voting “ought to pass” on LD 1411.