

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Gene Wahlberg
Executive Vice President
and Chief Operating Officer

O'Connor Corporation
General Contractor
45 Industrial Drive
Canton, Ma 02021

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE BILL NO. 374 (RAISED)**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING MILLWRIGHT
CONTRACTOR AND JOURNEYMAN LICENSES**

MARCH 11, 2014

Good morning, distinguished members. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on behalf of Senate Bill No. 374.

I come here today to advocate on behalf of the Bill for contractors like myself.

O'Connor Corporation is a company that works almost exclusively in power plants. We build and maintain plants primarily in New England but we have worked as far west as California and as far south as Georgia. We recently were involved in the construction of the Plainfield Renewable Energy Project. We currently have workers at plants in Milford and in Dayville. We will soon be working in Monroe. We are a union contractor who gets its workers from various union halls throughout the States. When we get a new job we look to the local labor for support and to provide the workers needed for us to perform our tasks. The type of work that we perform is hazardous and requires great precision. Workers are regularly exposed to, or, come in contact with, or work around electricity, high temperatures and pressures, hazardous flammable fuels, fluids, lubricants, heights, weights etcetera.

Our concern as it relates to S.B. 374 centers in worker and plant safety but also the safety of the general public. We are merely one unsafe act away from being out of business and effecting lives that reach well beyond our direct employees.

Our safety record is the key to our continued success. We are judged more often prior to the start of work based upon one primary factor, safety. Owners of plants typically require a prequalification process prior to awarding work. The primary factor that we are judged on is our safety record. Our OSHA recordable rate, and the number of lost

days due to injury, the number of fatalities are always determining factors to being awarded work. The criteria are continually being pushed downward, as it should be. We hear it from owners all of the time "zero is the only acceptable number" and we agree.

In addition to the obvious hazards there are hazards that continue on after the work is completed. The machines that we are talking about here are huge and extremely heavy. They rotate at high speeds and require incredible precision while being maintained or installed, tolerances that are measured to the tenths and thousands of an inch. If they are assembled, balanced and/or aligned improperly it can lead to catastrophic failure. The impacts of these failures can lead to plant personnel injuries, high cost of repair or replacement of equipment, electricity outages etcetera.

That said these are dangerous places to work with numerous hazards. Power plants are not the place for on the job training they are far too dangerous. The maintenance schedules are very tight. We need workers who already possess the skills to perform the work as well as the knowledge of the equipment and the tasks at the moment of hiring them. We believe S.B. 374 will provide contractors with the skilled, trained workers that are needed to perform the work safely.

Please pass S.B. 374 so that we may have the skilled, competent, trained workers to perform our work in a safe and efficient manner and so that the State may continue to have reliable source of electric power.

Thank you.