

17 March 2024



## Friends of Casco Bay Casco BAYKEEPER

Re: Friends of Casco Bay Opposition to LD 2246, *An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems*

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Friends of Casco Bay opposes LD 2246 as written and respectfully requests that, rather than passing this bill, the State reexamine its offshore wind (OSW) port selection to decide if the Sears Island proposal can be modified to avoid the sand dunes or to select another site that will cause less environmental harm.

For 35 years, Friends of Casco Bay has worked to improve and protect the health of Casco Bay. Climate change poses the biggest threat to the Bay, to all coastal Maine, and to the marine waters we depend upon. Accordingly, we have supported Governor Mill's approach to OSW, intended to create a cleaner energy source while minimizing environmental harm.

Governor Mills evinced this balancing act in her [announcement](#) that Sear's Island was the preferred site to develop OSW port facilities:

The selection of the site follows an extensive public stakeholder process led by the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Port Authority to consider the State's primary port development options, including multiple potential sites in the Port of Searsport, the Port of Eastport, and the Port of Portland. The State concluded that the Sears Island parcel is the most feasible port development site in terms of location, logistics, cost, **and environmental impact** based on input from port and offshore wind stakeholders, including the University of Maine, and on technical and engineering analyses.

It appears that the review process failed to note the presence of sand dunes. The proper remedy is to reexamine the site selection to avoid harming critical coastal sand dunes. It is not to pass a law permitting destruction of the sand dunes in contravention of existing environmental laws and to actions set forth in the Maine Won't Wait climate action plan, which seeks to protect critical coastal habitats. As written, LD 2246 creates a slippery slope precedent that would allow future administrations to avoid application of environmental laws for other purposes.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you recommend that LD 2246 Ought Not To Pass as written. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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