



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Pete Nichols, State Director, Sierra Club Maine Chapter
Date: 18 March 2024
Re: **Testimony in Opposition to LD 2266**

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee,

I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members and supporters nation-wide. We urge you to vote **"ought not to pass" on LD 2266.**

While we strongly support offshore wind and its necessary infrastructure, amending ANY environmental protections to make room for a project before any alternatives analysis or permitting has been done is alarming and unacceptable.

The policy you are considering today is incredibly irresponsible. It is further evidence of inadequate planning on the State's part as it relates to siting offshore wind projects. It is well documented that coastal dunes and wetlands are the first line of defense in mitigating climate impacts. According to the Maine Climate Council's Coastal and Marine Working Group, Maine must *"protect and restore beaches and sand dunes in order to help coastal marshes, beaches and dunes migrate inland with sea level rise and continue to support biodiversity and resilience¹."* And, according to the Maine Climate Council, *"a 2023 report from the EPA estimates that Maine Sequesters 23% of New England's Blue Carbon"*. Most of the carbon stock along the Maine coast resides in salt marshes and coastal wetlands.

This proposed policy would set a dangerous precedent for future impacts from any development to coastal ecosystems and runs counter to the efforts of the State and local communities to address the climate crisis. Implementing offshore wind infrastructure along the Maine coast brings with it a great responsibility to the coast, coastal habitat, and those that rely on the coast for their livelihoods, enjoyment, and protection from and a shifting climate. We ask that you take this into account when considering this hasty policy in front of you today. Thank you for your time and consideration, and please vote 'ought not to pass' on LD 2266.

Sincerely,

Pete Nichols, State Director
Sierra Club Maine

¹ A Report from the Coastal & Marine Working Group of the Maine Climate Council 5 June 2020