

Susie O'Keeffe
Montville
LD 226

We are in a downward spiral of climate collapse and extinction. Our energy use and development must protect carbon sequestering habitat while reducing energy waste, and maximizing efficiency and solar energy, not destroy them!

There are many ways to reach our renewable energy targets, but developing Sears Island is not one of them. The State of Maine has already spent nearly \$6 million on the current wind port effort; a project which is not supported by a majority of the community, is unlikely to meet the regulatory hurdles, cannot attract federal money, and relies on technology that is untested.

According to numerous reports, including the International Panel on Climate Change, intact forests and ecosystems are the best tools for mitigating climate change. Protecting Sears Island completely and once and for all is a direction this State must take if it is really serious about tackling the impacts of the climate crisis.

The forests and wetlands on Sears Island are reported to have sequestered 88,750 metric tons of carbon in 2024, the equivalent of 74,000 cars per year. By 2050 they will sequester 96,685 metric tons. Late succession forests naturally cool stream and bay waters and support natural fisheries, including cod nurseries, lobster, clam beds, and migrating fish including Atlantic salmon and sturgeon. Destroying forested acres and carbon sequestering wetlands and soils for wind power is counterproductive.

Waste, and lack of implementation of efficiency measures, coupled with not fully building out Maine's solar capacity, primarily using ROOFTOPS for solar power, need to be addressed before destroying ecosystems that provide public access to the coast, and all of the benefits mentioned above.