



Glenn "Chip" Curry
Senator, District 11

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Chip Curry introducing
**LD 1818, "An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power
Projects"**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
May 9, 2023*

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, I am Senator Chip Curry, and I represent the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County. Today I am here to present LD 1818, "An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects."

The development of offshore wind power in the Gulf of Maine is a critical component of Maine's plan for ending its dependence on fossil fuels and achieving its aggressive and necessary renewable energy goals. Building an offshore wind industry in Maine will create thousands of good-paying, family-sustaining, jobs that benefit all of Maine. By working closely and in good faith with our fishermen and lobstermen, we can make sure to protect their interests and their livelihoods. But we can only do this: We can only reach our renewable energy goals, create thousands of good-paying jobs, and protect our fishermen if we are the ones leading it. We need to win the federal offshore wind leases and win the federal resources necessary to assist in the development of an offshore wind port.

Building a port is critical to the development of the Maine offshore wind industry. Most of the actual work is not going to occur out on the ocean but on land and in port. This bill does not seek to define where a port will be sited. That work is being done by Maine's Department of Transportation and other important local stakeholders. We know that any big infrastructure project requires strong community buy-in and the provisions in this bill assure potential host communities that we are placing workers, communities, and the environment first.

LD 1818 sets strong standards for the development and operation of port facilities, and positions Maine to secure permits and federal funding for these facilities. Specifically, this bill addresses job quality, workforce development, coastal conservation, and climate resilience.

First, this bill positions Maine to maximize federal port funding opportunities by requiring offshore wind port developers leasing state facilities to enter into Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and Labor Peace Agreements (LPAs). A PLA is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement with one or more labor organizations that lays out the terms and conditions of employment for a specific project. A Labor Peace Agreement assures work stability and continuity by preventing employer interference in labor organizing campaigns and preventing labor organizers from engaging in work stoppages, picketing, or other economic interference. PLAs and Labor Peace Agreements are standard tools on large infrastructure projects to ensure a reliable supply of well-trained labor, predictable and aligned work schedules, and guarantees of no work stoppages.

*Chair, Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee
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Strong labor standards, including the use of PLAs and LPAs, run throughout the federal funding opportunities guidance. In fact, all four of the awards made for offshore wind ports (Bridgeport, Salem, Staten Island, and Michigan) included PLAs.

Secondly, LD 1818 emphasizes workforce development requiring developers to prioritize registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and hiring Maine residents. Developers would seek to recruit, train, and employ diverse populations historically left out of the construction trades, including those from impoverished rural communities. This approach ensures that we are developing a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the offshore wind industry while providing long-term career opportunities for Mainers.

Furthermore, this bill requires the operators of port facilities to pursue federal funding for zero-emission equipment, ensuring clean air and quieter port operations. This not only creates safer working conditions for Maine workers but also lowers the impact on nearby communities and contributes to the state's broader efforts to combat climate change.

I will conclude with where I began:

We can reach our renewable energy goals, create thousands of good-paying jobs, and protect our fishermen only if we are the ones leading the development of offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine. We need to win the federal offshore wind leases and win the federal resources necessary to assist in the development of an offshore wind port.

LD 1818 will increase our ability to create high-quality, family-sustaining jobs, spur economic growth, protect our fishermen, and secure a more sustainable, prosperous future for our state.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chip Curry".

Chip Curry
State Senator, District 11
Representing the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County