

Date: April 25, 2023

To: Labor & Housing Committee

From: Cole Cochran, Maine Youth Action

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1818, An Act Regarding Port Facilities

Relating to Offshore Wind Projects



Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and the honorable members of the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Cole Cochran, I am a senior at Thornton Academy in Saco, and I am here on behalf of Maine Youth Action, a statewide youth advocacy group that represents hundreds of young Mainers across the state from varying backgrounds. Maine Youth Action is testifying in support of LD 1818, An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Projects.

When Maine Youth Action does its outreach to young folks, whether they are in middle school, high school, or even college, we ask them some questions about what they consider to be relevant issues facing our state and our nation. These impassioned advocates predominantly identify the climate crisis as the main issue we need to address. As you all are probably aware of, the brunt of the climate crisis will be on my generation. This is something that weighs heavily on young Mainers regardless of background. We face major environmental degradation, a tumultuous economic outlook, and a significantly reduced quality of life. This is typically what drives us to become involved in politics. However, when we do this outreach, another piece is always emphasized. My generation emphasizes that our response to the climate crisis needs to be responsible and just. A response that needs to acknowledge that the policy decisions relating to the climate crisis is not only about solving the issue at hand, but is about reforming our communities to be equitable and sustainable. This is why our organization strongly supports LD 1818.

The development of offshore wind in Maine is critical to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and meeting our targets of 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. LD 1818 advances these goals by requiring offshore wind projects to submit a plan to DEP to ensure the use of zero emission port equipment and/or technology. The plan and the subsequent analysis means that the offshore wind projects can pursue federal funding for zero emission equipment. Offshore wind also has the potential to be a significant part of the state's energy sector, which will create thousands of jobs in its construction, operation and maintenance. As such, it is imperative that we have an equitable and sustainable approach to its development, which is what LD 1818 achieves. The bill provides a strong foundation for fair labor, such as the requirement of project labor agreements on any new infrastructure that supports offshore wind, as well as for offshore wind projects that lease existing port facilities, as outlined in section 2 and section 3 paragraph A, respectively.

Overall, understand this: the policy decisions you make today determine the reality that my generation will have to deal with. Therefore, when we talked with young folks and they identified that they want to see a just and equitable response to the climate crisis, I encourage the members of this committee to shape our policy to reflect as such. LD 1818 is a piece of legislation that is precisely what my generation is looking for and therefore I encourp[age you all to vote "ought to pass."