

Testimony of the Environmental Priorities Coalition
Before the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee
In Support of LD 1895
An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources
May 18, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Kelt Wilska and I offer testimony on behalf of Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC). The EPC is a partnership of 37 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations representing over 120,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that our environment provides. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 1895, An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources. We have designated this bill as EPC priority legislation for this session.

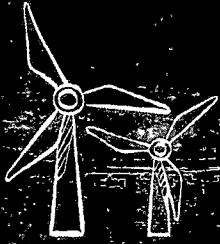
As I look around the committee room today, I see another unprecedented coalition—a group of environmental, labor, educational, municipal, and fisheries organizations that have rallied around responsible offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine. This legislation is the product of many months of consistent collaboration between these parties, and it reflects an urgent and united desire to mitigate the effects of climate change, protect our ocean ecosystems, and achieve a just clean energy transition where Maine's communities come out stronger and more resilient on the other side.

LD 1895 must become law this session. As our state's climate action plan so aptly states, *Maine Won't Wait*, and Maine can't wait, to address the rapidly worsening effects of climate change. A phased procurement of 2.8 gigawatts of commercially developed offshore wind energy will be an essential step towards meeting Governor Mills' goal of 100% clean energy by 2040. The Gulf of Maine is currently a victim of the climate crisis, with its waters warming faster than 99% of the world's oceans. Let us now make the Gulf of Maine part of the solution to the climate crisis, where it can provide an off-ramp from the volatile market of dirty oil and gas and an on-ramp to a clean energy future with stable and affordable electricity for all Mainers, all while using groundbreaking technology developed at the University of Maine.

A just clean energy transition is only truly just if our policy holds the most vulnerable communities at its center. LD 1895 does exactly that, ensuring that the economic benefits of this industry are distributed equitably throughout the entire state, from our coast to our most rural inland communities. With a proposed sponsor amendment, this legislation requires fishing communities investment plans and incentivizes development outside of Lobster Management Area 1, a priority among fisheries stakeholders that was included in the official recommendations from the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap Fisheries Working Group. Through provisions that facilitate project labor agreements and labor peace agreements and ensure that developers engage, consult with, and hire members of our state's most vulnerable communities, this bill harnesses the power of Mainers who are ready and willing to make offshore wind a reality in our state.

This bill launches a strong, equitable offshore wind industry the Maine way, building up our state's communities while ensuring the continued prosperity of our ocean ecosystems and marine heritage industries through requirements for environmental monitoring and mitigation. To achieve a just transition to Maine-made offshore wind, we need all voices at the table. LD 1895 reflects those voices. For this reason, Maine Conservation Voters, the dozens of organizations comprising the Environmental Priorities Coalition, and almost 450 Maine people who have signed the attached petition, all encourage you to vote "Ought to pass." Thank you for your time.

MAY 2023



**WE SUPPORT RESPONSIBLY
DEVELOPED OFFSHORE WIND IN
THE GULF OF MAINE**

THE UNDERSIGNED 446 MAINE RESIDENTS
SUPPORT A RESPONSIBLY DEVELOPED
OFFSHORE WIND INDUSTRY IN THE GULF OF
MAINE THAT ADHERES TO STRONG
ENVIRONMENTAL, LABOR, AND EQUITY
STANDARDS.

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