



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From Ania Wright, Legislative and Political Specialist, Sierra Club Maine
Date 5/18/2023
Re **Testimony in Support of LD 1895: An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology 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 strive to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote 'ought to pass' on L D 1895.

The urgency of the climate crisis requires that we act swiftly to sustainably generated energy. However, we must ensure that the transition is completed in a just and equitable way. L D 1895 is a critical piece to the puzzle for Maine. If implemented, it would strengthen Maine's economy by stabilizing energy costs and creating thousands of new family-supporting, clean energy jobs through the procurement of offshore wind energy, while also responsibly siting turbines in the Gulf of Maine in order to protect wildlife, avoid impacts to local lobstering and fishing communities, and protect this shared resource for future generations.

The Sierra Club strongly supports the development of substantial wind resources for electricity generation. Wind power is a reliable, clean, renewable resource that can help reduce our dependence on polluting fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) and nuclear power for electricity¹. The Gulf of Maine is the best offshore wind resource area in the eastern US, with the ultimate potential of tens of gigawatts of wind generation capacity². The consequences of our continued dependence on burning fossil fuels for electricity include global warming, acid rain, smog, flammable accidents, increased incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases, and other forms of pollution and natural resource damage, including mountaintop removal and strip mining.

This bill and the sponsor's amendment also ensure our transition to renewable energy is done justly with the inclusion of the labor peace agreement section and the establishment of the Fishing Community Protection and Low-Income Ratepayer Fund used to incentivize the siting of wind project to avoid conflict with commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Maine and related human uses of the State's submerged lands as well as assist low-income ratepayers.

¹ <https://www.sierraclub.org/policy/energy/wind-siting-advisory>

² <https://www.energy.gov/eeie/articles/computing-americas-offshore-wind-energy-potential>

Though as written this bill refers to the siting of turbines, and not of port infrastructure, the Sierra Club would like to see included in this legislation or future legislation language, the siting of onshore manufacturing, assembling and launching facilities, using the same high environmental, equity, and labor standards as proposed for the offshore wind floating turbines in L D 1895. This could be achieved in this bill by inserting the term 'and related infrastructure' to the definition of offshore wind power projects in Section E of the bill. Our intention here is to focus development in the least environmentally harmful areas possible or areas that have already been developed, in order to protect undeveloped land as much as possible, as recommended in the latest IPCC report and Maine Won't Wait.

L D 1895 includes strong standards to build high-quality career pathways, protect Maine's environment, and ensure economic benefits to many Maine communities. We urge the committee to vote 'ought to pass'. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ania Wright
Legislative & Political Specialist
Sierra Club Maine