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Testimony on LD 1884 & 1895

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

I am Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham and I am here today to speak on the off-shore wind power bills before the committee

In 2017 offshore wind generation appeared to be a dead issue in Maine. The PUC had completed a years-long study that deemed it too expensive for ratepayers. But now it is moving again, and at the speed of light.

In 2019 80% of Maine's electricity generation came from renewable energy sources. Maine leads New England in wind power generation. We rank sixth in the nation and wind provides 24% of our net generation. I point this out to say that Maine is a leader. I see many people advocating offshore wind development portraying Maine as being in the back of the pack on renewables which is far from the truth.

What I'd like to know is why haven't we started an independent study on the environmental impacts of offshore wind development? We have been told that we need to move quickly given the Governor's ambitious goals. I've heard this over and over and over again from many people in the legislature, in the bureaucracy, in the special interest groups, and the high paid lobbyists working for foreign corporations. Where did these goals come from and why are we using these goals as a target?

We are being told that we need to hurry so we may be a leader, but what does that really mean? Does that really mean that Mitsubishi and other foreign corporations could be a leader? How does this really benefit the Maine taxpayers and ratepayers?

We've been told there is no contract price on the limit the power delivery will cost. We need to make sure that whatever happens that the PUC has the final say on the cost of electricity prices.

The fishing industry has been getting thrown under the bus on this issue. We continue to hear that the Gulf of Maine has 36,000 mi² of water and the fishing industry needs to share. Well in that regard state waters are only 3,000 square miles. So why isn't it easy to take that 3,000 miles immediately off the table? Federal Area 1 of which is the nearest federal area where all 100% of

Maine's lobster industry fishes in federal waters is only 11,098 mi² in its entirety from the New Hampshire border to Canada. That leaves 2/3 of the Gulf of Maine that is un-fished by Maine's fishing fleet. So why is the fishing industry branded as selfish, when we're only talking about 1/3 of the water in the GOM? We can't even get that 1/3 excluded from this conversation? It seems to be a contradictory statement to call the fishing industry the selfish one, when more than 2/3 of the GOM is not fished by the industry and we can't even move the conversation into that 2/3 of water.

We have posed many and by we, I mean the fishing industry, many questions on the environmental repercussions that have not been answered. Everything from ocean currents and surface temperature warming (cold-pooling) to whales, sea mammals, sea birds, and sea life too numerous to list it all could be negatively impacted with devastating consequences. It's not good enough to simply state that we need to address global climate change and ignore all the possible negative environmental impacts. We need an independent study and then a roadmap that focuses on the 2/3 of the GOM that doesn't impact the majority of Maine's fisheries. It is irresponsible and dangerous to consider sitting windmills before studies and a roadmap are done. This is the current course we are on. If there is to be a research array it needs to be done beyond 40 miles and Maine should be guaranteed substantial returns from the corporations who stand profit.

I encourage you to support LD 1884 An Act to Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development, with an OTP report.

I would urge you to vote ONTP on 1895 An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources. If you pass LD 1895, please make sure that it prohibits development inside of federal area 1, as it would devastate Maine's fishing industry and would fill the night horizon with blinking red lights.

Thank you for your consideration. I'll answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Billy Bob Faulkingham
State Representative