



**John Clyde Williamson, marine resource consultant  
Sea Keeper Charters**

201 Western Avenue  
Kennebunk, ME 04043  
Cell (207) 939-7055  
[john@seakeeper.org](mailto:john@seakeeper.org)

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## **LD 1895, An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources**

### **Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee Testimony**

My name is John Williamson. I have worked in federal water commercial fisheries from Maine to Florida, and in Alaska. I have served on the New England Fishery Management Council and as a community organizer. In 2010, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) initiated leasing of large areas on the Eastern Seaboard for offshore wind energy production, and I've followed that process closely. Between 2016 and 2019 I was employed by a major international energy company to serve as Fishery Liaison for offshore wind projects off the coasts of southern Massachusetts and New Jersey.

Dozens of sites, from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras, are currently leased for offshore wind and in permitting. Construction has begun. BOEM has now initiated a similar leasing process for the Gulf of Maine, with the goal of designating large areas for offshore wind development, with lease-sale contracts completed by Fall 2024. This will be a difficult negotiation among three states and the Federal bureaucracy. Maine cannot be complacent about sustaining its interests.

The timing of the passage of the bill now before this committee, LD 1895, is important, coming early in the Federal process. It will provide the State with greater leverage over decisions affecting lease area locations, transmission corridor routes and impacts to coastal communities. Massachusetts has announced a goal of procuring 5600 megawatts of offshore wind energy, making it a dominant player. A power purchase commitment as achieved by LD 1895, will give Maine equal standing in the lease process, and garner the attention of the higher quality, deep-pocketed developers bidding for those leases.

In the future, the fishing industry and the offshore wind industry will be sharing space on the water and on the waterfront. Provisions in this Bill are designed to encourage these industries to find common ground and, hopefully, enable permitting and construction to proceed without conflict. The bill creates incentives for developers seeking to do business with Maine to locate development outside of the most valuable fishing grounds, Lobster Management Area 1, and requires developers to submit and fund fishing community investment plans, to ensure fishing communities have the resources they need to adapt and thrive.

Offshore wind energy production comes with large upfront costs for developers, securing a market for that energy has proven to be highly competitive. LD 1895 establishes a clear process for procuring power for Maine at low rates, while setting standards for workforce development, manufacturing and investment in coastal communities and fisheries.

I urge the committee to support LD 1895. Thank you for your consideration.