

Terry Alexander

Testimony in support of LD 1895

I am Terry Alexander and am a trawler fisherman from Harpswell, Maine. I have spent 46 years fishing in the Gulf of Maine. I am currently the co-chair of the Research Consortium on offshore wind. I also co-chaired the Fisheries Working Group in the Offshore Wind Roadmap process.

With lots of reluctance the group chose the lobster management area 1 (LMA1) line as a compromise because no one in the group thought it is a good idea. That being said, I am here to support the line in LD 1895 because it follows the advice of the Fisheries Working Group. We met 80 times over 2 years to come to this compromise.

This line protects several different fisheries that are important to Maine fishermen. Herring, Northern Gulf of Maine scallop, Lobster, Dayboat and Gillnet Groundfish, Tuna and the whiting fishery all operate in area 1. All of these fisheries create good paying jobs for the men and women of all our coastal communities. The line protects lots of areas of essential fish habitat and spawning areas.

Fishing is an important part of our history along the Maine coast. In my town of Harpswell I believe we hold more lobster licenses than any other town in the state. I believe that number is 264 if I remember right and that doesn't count all the other permits in town. Lots of areas of essential fish habitat are protected.

It's a known management line and doesn't hinder other states from making similar rules on their coasts. If you look at the chart of the Gulf of Maine you will realize just how little of the Gulf this takes out of the equation. The worry is we will push the developer to move to another state and try to get it moved closer. They will run into the same fishing operations there. That is already off the table when BOEM cut the call area down in the first round. I know we fish all the way to areas off the coast of New Jersey chasing fish and squid.

The furthest point offshore of area 1 is around 50 miles from Maine. In Southern New England one of the cables to shore is 172 miles long so the distance from shore is not a hindrance in building an offshore wind farm.

I believe that this bill passing is a vote to protect the fishing industry because no matter what we think, Offshore wind is coming to the Gulf of Maine and this bill makes it affect a lot less people during construction. I say that because there are at least 1600 permits allowed to fish in the Gulf of Maine for different species and 90 percent of that activity takes place in area 1. Once you pass that line the fleet of boats -- of which I am one -- that fishes outside that line is much smaller. Most of the people that fish further off also fish in area 1. We chase the fish wherever they go. My hope is that with a much smaller group we can work closely with the developer to minimize the impacts on fishermen, fish and habitat outside area 1.

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