

Good afternoon

My name is Chris Hart and I am the Vice President of the Americas for BlueFloat Energy

BlueFloat is a global offshore wind developer with one of the largest pipelines of projects in the world

That pipeline is almost 25 GW globally and is split between APAC, Europe and the Americas

In 2022, Wood Mackenzie identified BlueFloat as the fastest-growing offshore wind developer in the world

About 90% of our developments globally are floating, and we consider our expertise in the technical aspects of floating offshore wind as one of our competitive advantages, along with our entrepreneurial culture and the support of our world-class owners

Although I live in Houston, it's always a pleasure for me to come back to Maine

In a way, my offshore wind journey started in Maine when the team I led at the US Department of Energy provided seed funding to Dr Dagher and the University of Maine as part of our Offshore Wind Demonstration Projects effort back in 2010

My brother graduated from Maine Maritime Academy and my sister-in-law was raised Down East in Addison

So, it is a pleasure to be here with you today, testifying in support of LD1895

There is a lot to like about the bill and we applaud your efforts to act decisively and send a signal to the market that Maine is open for offshore wind. In particular, we appreciate the following elements

- 1) **A procurement timeline that is aligned with the lease auction process** A gap between the BOEM lease auction process and the procurement process can add unnecessary inefficiencies and uncertainties from a developer's perspective
- 2) **A mandated cadence between successive procurements** Similarly, this is something that gives certainty to project developers and increases the "bankability" of a geography
- 3) **Mandated minimum procurement targets, but no maximum** We have seen this lead to a sustained level of interest from the development community in other markets
- 4) **Clearly articulated evaluation criteria and bid requirements** Certainty is the goal here from the developer's perspective
- 5) **An offshore wind transmissions procurement** BlueFloat sees this as the largest hurdle to overcome for the Gulf of Maine market. The inclusion of this procurement from the beginning is an indication that the State is considering it and paying attention to lessons learned from other markets

With that being said, there are other elements of the bill that we appreciate are still under development, namely

- a) **Coordination with other New England States** On one hand, coordination with neighboring jurisdictions can add unwanted complexity and lengthen timelines. On the other hand, it can grow markets and breakdown barriers, particularly, in this case, when it comes to transmission

We would add that coordination with your neighbors to the north would also be a worthwhile consideration

- b) **Evaluation criteria** Based on our experience, we see that the 40% level for community and natural resource benefits is high. Of course, developers will propose projects that conform to the mandated evaluation criteria, but it is our experience that this high of a “non-ratepayer” benefit can cause stakeholder fatigue and therefore problems with the long-term viability of the market
- c) **Bid requirements** Similarly, including an explicit \$/MW commitment to the Renewable Ocean Energy Trust and the Justice Fund which totals to over \$50M over the life of the procurement is an approach that could create unwanted friction with the community and thereby threaten the long-term viability of the market
- d) **Offshore wind transmission procurement** While the inclusion of this language in the bill is a good first step, it needs to be better-defined over time. Currently, the language raises many questions about the mechanics of the procurement, and we trust that those questions will be answered in due course

I would like to close by referencing the written testimony that I provided

You will notice on the last two pages, 39 and 40, there are some lessons-learned from our experience in European markets. On slide 40 in particular is a case study from the French market. On this slide you will notice price caps for the various Rounds and also a callout in the lower right corner that highlights some of the positive attributes from the approach that the French have taken

I hope you find these material useful and helpful and I yield the floor in case there are any questions that I can answer