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*Testimony of Representative Gerry Runte introducing LD 2266*  
**An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dunes**  
*Before the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and fellow members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, on behalf of the Administration I am pleased to present LD 2262 **An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dunes**.

This legislation is a crucial step in implementing our offshore wind program and, like its procurement bill which I co-sponsored, balances the critical need to balance environmental protection with Maine's clean energy goals.

Coastal sand dune systems are a vital natural resource safeguarded by the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) and DEP's Chapter 355 regulations, which prohibit new or expanded structures on or seaward of a frontal coastal dune.

Sears Island hosts three distinct sand dunes. Two of those sand dunes are located on the portion of Sears Island owned by the Department of Transportation. The proposed project involves construction on one of those dunes, a small pocket dune that has formed behind a jetty that was built several decades ago. Including this dune in the project footprint was a decision not made lightly but with full consideration of the broader environmental and economic benefits. Significantly, the project's footprint will not impact the other dune near the causeway.

An amendment will be offered in the next few days that will propose a targeted exception to the Chapter 355 safeguards for the dune formed behind the jetty on Sears Island. This exception is narrowly defined, ensuring no other dune on the island would be affected. Additionally, it mandates the transfer of a portion of the Department of Transportation's parcel that includes the second dune system to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, further safeguarding our valued coastal landscapes.

LD 2266 represents a thoughtful, strategic approach to environmental stewardship in the era of climate change. It ensures that while we advance crucial renewable energy projects, we remain vigilant in protecting our natural resources.

Members of the Administration are present to provide further details on the bill and the intended amendment.

I thank the committee for its consideration and urge an ought to pass recommendation.

Gerry Runte