



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Reagan Paul

PO Box 165

Winterport, ME 04496

Cell: (207) 944-8033

Reagan.Paul@legislature.maine.gov

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Reagan Paul and I represent House District 37, which includes the town of Searsport, where Sears Island is located, which has been named as the preferred offshore wind port terminal location. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 2266, "*An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems.*"

The policy before you is incredibly irresponsible. According to the Maine State website, coastal sand dune systems are fragile, dynamic resources that comprise only about two percent of Maine's overall coastline and are considered resources of state significance. Less than 30 years ago, before everything became politicized, the US EPA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service all prepared a document describing and evaluating the effects of a marine dry cargo terminal on Sears Island and its impact on aquatic resources, wetlands, and wildlife.

They found that the Sears Island terminal would irreparably harm the aquatic environment, would disrupt water patterns and circulation, would impact threatened and endangered species, would impact wetlands and mudflats, and would significantly degrade the waters. They determined there would be substantial, permanent adverse effects on human health or welfare...there would be substantial permanent adverse effects on life stages of aquatic life and ecosystem diversity, productivity, and stability...there would be substantial permanent adverse effects on aesthetic values by introducing a major industrial facility onto the largest undeveloped island in Maine as the site is visible from Moose Point State Park, US Route 1, Turtle Head Cove and Belfast bay. It was also determined that the remaining acreage would be compromised by noise, light, and other influences of the proposed port and that economic value related to the commercial fishing industry would be severely adversely effected by displacing existing and potential commercial fisheries, along with 25 other pages of concerns.

District 37- Winterport, Frankfort (part), Prospect, Stockton Springs, Searsport

As you can see, choosing Sears Island when there is an already industrialized alternative across the sound, called Mack Point, is despicable. The study even addressed that and concluded that the fresh water and marine habitats at Mack Point were clearly inferior to Sears Island and degraded by the current industrial uses. It continued to say that marine resources for Mack Point were dramatically different than those at Sears Island and that it had a much less diverse marine habitat, and that if a port was pursued at Mack Point, the aquatic impacts would not be trivial but also would not trigger the significant degradation of the waters of the United States, as would the choice of Sears Island.

I believe that we should be analysts of information, not advocates for a certain outcome. The evidence is clear that this bill would set a dangerous precedent for the destruction of our coastal ecosystems without proper due diligence and sound research and should receive a unanimous ought not to pass. It seeks to disregard environmental protections that have been put in place for a reason, before any further permitting or studies have been completed. Why? Do we now just change pesky laws and disregard protections to advance an agenda? Or do we follow the procedures put in place to protect our environment? It's like Humpty Dumpty... once Sears Island falls, it can't be put back together again. Let's exercise caution. Rushing things always leads to mistakes.

Let me clear: I am vehemently opposed to offshore wind for a number of reasons, none of them political, and I believe as more information emerges, others will feel the same. That is a conversation for another day. Today we can come together to fight for Sears Island. A vote against this bill is not a vote against offshore wind development. A vote against this bill is an act to save Sears Island from permanent destruction.

Thank you for your time,
Representative Reagan Paul