



March 17, 2024

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: LD 2266, An act regarding offshore wind terminals located in coastal sand dune systems

Co-chairs Senator Brenner and Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

We urge you not to pass LD 2266, “An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems.”

Overwhelming evidence cries out for dedicated, appropriate response to climate change now, not at some point later in the future. To do nothing is a crime. But critical climate change decisions require care to avoid further environmental damage that would exacerbate the very problem those decisions are meant to resolve. Locating an offshore wind manufacturing, assembling and launching facility must be accomplished with minimal or no adverse environmental damage.

Protecting significant ecological features of the landscape is precisely the purpose of the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). When enacting the NRPA, the Legislature declared, “that the State's rivers and streams, great ponds, fragile mountain areas, freshwater wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, coastal wetlands and **coastal sand dune systems are resources of state significance.**”

The “Maine Won’t Wait” climate plan recognizes the ecological significance of coastal sand dunes systems:

“Maine’s coastal sand dunes, wetlands, and marshes are also a powerful natural climate solution for protecting our coastal communities from flooding and erosion. Conserving and restoring coastal and marine areas will preserve their carbon-storage value as well as their other benefits.”

https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020_printable_12.1.20.pdf

Islesboro Islands Trust supports offshore wind and development, recognizing that it may play an important part in reducing fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. However, removing protections for coastal sand dune systems to further that objective, before completing a thorough analysis of alternative manufacturing, assembling and launching facility locations, as required by the Natural Resources Protection Act, makes no sense and creates a troubling precedent.

Importantly, Mack Point, an alternative for the proposed offshore wind facility, supports no coastal sand dune systems and would not require this change in environmental policy.

Yes, act now to address climate change. But act with care to prevent further harm. Please fulfill your responsibility to act on behalf of the people of Maine and vote ought not pass on An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune System.