



New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association

500 Southborough Dr. Suite 204

South Portland, ME 04106

In Opposition To

LD 2266 "An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems"

March 18, 2024

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee on Environment & Natural Resources, my name is Dustin Delano and I'm the Chief Operating Officer of the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA) as well as a commercial lobster fisherman of over 20 years. I am here today to oppose LD 2266, "An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems."

NEFSA officially launched in May of 2023 to advocate for fishermen from all different fisheries with the goal of protecting and preserving their heritage and the communities they support. Currently with 800 active members, NEFSA is the fastest growing fishing Association in New England. NEFSA's mission statement reads, "NEFSA is an alliance of the wild harvesters of the waters off of New England, dedicated to educating the public about how best to manage our seafood resources through sound science and best practices at conservation used by fishermen, with a view toward economic well-being, ecosystem sustainability and US food security."

According to Maine.gov, "The purpose section of the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) provides, in part, that: "The Legislature finds and declares 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. **These resources have great scenic beauty and unique characteristics, unsurpassed recreational, cultural, historical and environmental value of present and future benefit to the citizens of the State and that uses are causing the rapid degradation and, in some cases, the destruction of these critical resources, producing significant adverse economic and environmental impacts and threatening the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the State.**" With that said, Sears Island is home to a number of species of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and plant life. The west side of the island has a shallow shoal supporting meadows of eelgrass and other nursery habitats which play a crucial role in the fish and shellfish populations of Penobscot Bay. Significantly altering the sacred terrain of Sears Island would severely threaten all of those species.

Archeological records confirm that Native Americans started camping on the island over 3400 years ago, using it as a base for hunting, fishing, and resting—the primary uses of the island until Europeans arrived in the 1600's. According to the Friends of Sears Island website, In 1975, students from the Maine Maritime Academy discovered artifacts from the historic battle between the British and 44 Massachusetts

vessels—the largest American naval defeat before Pearl Harbor—in Stockton Harbor, using sonar. Many items preserved in the mud were unearthed after a subsequent archeological excavation. With that said, Sears Island is not only a wildlife sanctuary to birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and shellfish, but also an important historical site that should not be destroyed and replaced by industrial scale development.

The New England Fishermen’s Stewardship Association urges you to consider maintaining protection over the coastal sand dune systems of Sears Island. For many years locals have fought to protect one of the most beautiful, historical, wildlife sanctuaries in Maine. The destruction of such magnitude that is needed for a commercial scale, industrialized wind port would be a significant digression to beautiful Sears Island. NEFSA encourages you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 2266.