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I'm honored to have the opportunity to offer my testimony before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources in support of bill LD 2266 "An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems". As a union tradesman making a career of shoring up this state's electrical infrastructure, I was greatly heartened at the news of the initial approval of an offshore wind bill. The importance of offshore wind to workers, families, and the environment cannot be overstated. Now more than ever, residents of Maine are in need of the state's swift investment in renewable energy. Our workers and their families need the economic security of good, safe jobs that stem the bleed of young, able Mainers who feel relocation is the only way to have a prosperous future. And our beautiful, natural State deserves all we can muster to ensure its environment is protected by properly and intentionally sourcing the energy required to meet growing needs.

It's my understanding that the primary concern with the offshore wind program as planned is its interference with the protected dune system of Seasport. Any effort to preserve the environment is commendable but there has to be a way forward that mitigates change to the Seasport dunes while still leaving the state of Maine in a position to take full advantage of offshore wind's capabilities. I strongly believe Maine is equipped to find that way forward, as evidenced by the amount of care and environmental research that has gone into the project thus far which stands as a powerful testimony to the willingness and intention of planners to preserve and protect the environment, moving forward in an ethical, responsible manner. Research from the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap, technological innovation from the University of Maine, and aggregated knowledge from the international community have made Maine perhaps uniquely suited to grapple with this issue. It's important to keep deleterious development in check and limit harm to natural fixtures like the Seasport dune system and *this initiative is equal to the task.*

Offshore wind development represents an incalculably significant measure to attenuate change to our climate. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, climate change has been a detriment to some fish populations and our vital winter recreation industry. In contrast, research has shown offshore wind installations can improve fish habitats by providing fish with shelter and edible plant growth, making installations viable reproductive hubs. Offshore wind also addresses the warming that has greatly contributed to major flooding seen across the State as rainfall increases due to our ever milder winters. The damage to homes and livelihoods of Maine residents will only grow as this problem remains improperly addressed. And while offshore wind in Maine cannot single-handedly quash this global issue, we do have a responsibility to ourselves and the planet to do all we can, leading the nation by example.

According to the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap, offshore wind opens up job opportunities in more than 100 professions spanning the spectrum of entry level to highly skilled positions. Economically, development would be a boon to Waldo county and go a long way toward ameliorating insecurity as hardships increase for Americans everywhere. The jobs created will be good, stable employment with employers that are committed to instituting proper safety protocols and competitive wages. This may be a good way to address the shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging an influx of workers, giving Mainers an important entrance into cultivating permanent, transferable skills. No doubt, this would increase Maine's capability to pursue important ventures in the future and ensure that Maine workers - not labor hired out of state - are poised to be the primary beneficiaries of building endeavors in Maine.

Thank you for your time. I'm pleased to be able to rely upon the prudence of this Committee and I'm hopeful about the future of our state.