

March 18, 2024

Testimony in Opposition to LD 2266

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

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Nathan Gould, and I am a resident of Winterport. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 2266, “An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems.”

Amid the discussion of the proposed wind port project in Searsport, what has become apparent is that, instead of ends justifying means, means are pursued that don’t even achieve—and run contrary to—the stated ends. Laws meant to preserve coastal dunes are suddenly nullified by this bill—protecting a wind port project takes undeserved precedence over protecting a habitat.

There are claims that don’t match reality. Among these claims are that of an urgent need to protect our environment and natural resources and reduce our carbon footprint. This goal is pursued with urgency, as the sudden introduction of this bill attests. Yet in the haste to justify the wind port we move one step closer to marring an ecological resource. The unique character of Sears Isle is in jeopardy, with long-lasting environmental and scenic impacts, both at the proposed terminal and at the 1000-foot-tall offshore windmills.

Also consider the carbon emissions from fabricating and transporting windmill components, and the environmental impact of decommissioning.

Another claim has been that the project will create jobs and benefit the local economy, yet parts of the manufacturing process occur neither in our State nor our Nation. Rather, this will hurt fishermen and cost jobs as ecosystems are altered and lobster habitats are destroyed with increases to water temperature and massive chains dragging along the seabed as the tide changes. There is also the endangerment of right whales and other aquatic creatures evidenced by other offshore wind projects.

What also must be considered are the effects on the economy from subsidizing these projects as costs are passed down to ratepayers.

This also puts at risks lands of historical and cultural importance to the tribes and coastal peoples of this state. Ancient fishing areas and burial grounds will be altered as a result of the wind port.

There are numerous considerations that ought to have been given, and this bill affords us an opportunity to pause and reevaluate. Are we actually furthering the stated goals of protecting our environment through offshore wind? Or is the urgency of a crisis used to justify and provide cover for faults, inefficiencies, and harms of offshore wind? Are we willing to pay the price of destroying those natural treasures our Creator has given to Maine?

Even if the wind port is not directly on trial in this hearing, it is entirely relevant. Please consider the consequences to permitting coastal dunes to be disturbed. I ask the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Nathan C Gould

Winterport