



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters, Neither For Nor Against LD 2266
“An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems”
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
March 18, 2024

Good day Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and distinguished members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee. I am Beth Ahearn, Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy.

We offer testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 2266, *“An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems.”* Climate change is the greatest threat currently facing our planet and developing new local energy is necessary to meet our statutory targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% and move to 100% clean energy by 2050. Floating offshore wind presents Maine with an opportunity to harness vast amounts of clean energy, with relatively fewer environmental impacts than other sources of energy.

Sears Island, owned by the State, was identified in February 2024 as the site of a potential offshore wind port. A coastal sand dune exists in the area proposed for port development and Maine’s Coastal Sand Dune Rules prohibit development from damaging coastal dunes. LD 2266 seeks an exemption for the dune in question. There are in total three coastal sand dunes on Sears Island which were mapped in 2023. If this exemption is approved with this legislation, MCV strongly suggests that the dune should be compensated for. Maine Audubon has been the protector of sand dunes for decades and should be central in deciding what compensation is appropriate in this instance.

This is a very narrow exemption (and should be drafted as narrowly as possible) and this project will undergo a thorough review both by state and federal regulators.

Thank you for your time and attention as you evaluate this legislation.