



Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
c/o Office of Fiscal and Program Review  
5 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

February 27, 2025

**RE: LD 210, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027**

Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Gattine, Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Sachs, and Members of the AFA and EUT Committees:

My name is Ania Wright, Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on LD 210, specifically, the proposed budget initiatives and language related to the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

Maine Audubon offers our support for several of the proposed budget initiatives and language related to GEO<sup>1</sup> in order to support the office and the vital work they are fulfilling relating to state energy policy, planning, and development. Items of particular interest to Maine Audubon are the establishment of a cabinet level Department of Energy Resources and subsequent transfer of existing funds and resources to the Department, funding of the Clean Energy Partnership (CEP), and increasing the annual funding to the Offshore Wind Research Consortium.

Maine Audubon enthusiastically supports the creation of the Department of Energy Resources, which would allow for more consistency in the planning and management of Maine's energy system and for the effective prioritization of affordable, reliable, and clean energy for Maine people. The coordination and long-term planning of our energy resources is also critical to increasing resilience of Maine's grid and energy infrastructure, which experiences some of the highest outages in the country and is vulnerable to the increasing climate change fueled storms and extreme weather events. This initiative is budget neutral, and is a common sense change that adequately acknowledges the responsibilities of GEO and will create more consistency.

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<sup>1</sup> Budget proposals related to GEO can be found 2026-2027 Recommended General Fund Biennial Budget – p. A-248-249 and p. A-276-279.

Additionally, we support the proposed \$1 million annually for the Clean Energy Partnership. The requested funding will allow for the continuation of the program, which is led by GEO in partnership with the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), the Maine Department of Labor (DOL), the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and other partners. The clean energy workforce development and innovation initiatives that have come from these partnerships reached over 3,500 participants and 40 businesses and community organizations in 2024, contributing greatly to the Governor's goal of increasing clean energy jobs to 30,000 by 2030. Funding the CEP and workforce initiatives is truly an investment in our State's future, and is critical to meeting the industry and business needs of the growing clean energy sector.

Finally, Maine Audubon supports funding proposals related to the Offshore Wind Research Consortium. Maine Audubon has participated in the Consortium on its advisory board and has seen first hand the critical impact that research and development on the burgeoning industry have had to assist policy and to provide unbiased and transparent information. We know that the offshore wind industry can and will have impacts on communities, our environment, and wildlife – both positive and negative. It is our responsibility as a state to fully understand individual and cumulative impacts, and the Consortium has allowed for us to gather data regarding relationships between the fishing community and offshore wind, mapping the seafloor in key areas of the Gulf of Maine, and research on the potential impacts of offshore wind to species such as bats and seabirds. In this unique time regarding offshore wind, we avidly support proposals related to the Consortium.

With Director Dan Burgess's bold leadership, GEO has embraced their mission to ensure affordable, reliable, clean energy for Maine people and businesses. Maine Audubon is proud to be a partner in GEO's ongoing work and looks forward to the critical work we have ahead of us. **Supporting the proposed budget initiatives and language in GEO's budget will allow the office to do their best work.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright  
*Policy Advocate*  
Maine Audubon