

Good morning ENR Committee Members,

My name is Kevin Jerram and I live in Stockton Springs. I wrote this testimony in support of LD226 and LD735 while looking at Sears Island from my kitchen table in the 1840s house I am rebuilding.

Lately, my partner and I have been working on a puzzle with her two kids. The pieces are scattered all over the table, but a beautiful picture of deep sea corals is slowly emerging. I'm planning to frame it when it's done, to hang proudly in my kitchen as something we took time to build together, the right way. I realized this puzzle is a metaphor for building Maine's environmental future and that protecting Sears Island is a critical piece of that process.

For a little context, I have worked as an engineer in coal-, oil-, and gas-fired power plants, on remote Maine islands, and at sea on Maine-based ships. Now I work with research vessels around the world, including in the Arctic where we will probably start seeing ice-free summers in a few years. I understand the motivations for more renewable energy, the complexities of offshore wind projects, and the potential benefits that a wind port might bring to Searsport and neighboring towns like mine.

However, I reject the premise that we must destroy the environment to save it. Our renewable energy and conservation goals actually go hand in hand. We can build a wind port at Mack Point and conserve Sears Island because neither project precludes the other. While renewables face major headwinds and other environmental safeguards are rolled back, conservation is a clear step we can take right now.

Remember, Mack Point and Sears Island are next door to each other, so this is not some sort of NIMBY elitist perspective. This is my backyard, and I am going to see 800-ft cranes and 1000-ft turbines at Mack Point, too. My neighbors and I welcome responsible development here. The fundamental question is whether we still have Sears Island at the end of it.

You've heard what a special place this is, but if you haven't been to the island, please make the time to visit. Walk the beaches, smell the forest, hear the birds, feel the wind, and see what you are voting on. Fortunately, people from across the political spectrum care deeply about this island and support these bills. They are rare, bipartisan pieces of a much larger and more nuanced puzzle for the state of Maine.

I am asking you, as your neighbor, to look at the box again and see how this conservation piece fits perfectly into the bigger picture. I am asking you, as your constituent, to support LD226 and LD735, conserve Sears Island forever, and ensure responsible wind port development in my backyard.

That is the bright future of midcoast Maine that we can very proudly build together and frame for many generations to come. Thank you sincerely for your time and effort to protect this truly important place.

Kevin Jerram  
Stockton Springs