



Testimony of Ben Brown, Director of Industry of Education, Business Network for Offshore Wind Before The Maine Legislative Committee On Energy, Utilities, and Technology

May 4, 2021

Good Afternoon,

My name is Benjamin Brown. I live in Gray, Maine, but I am testifying from my parent's house in Charleston, Maine today.

I work for the Business Network for Offshore Wind. The Business Network is dedicated to growing the offshore wind industry and economic opportunities here in the US. We have staff nationwide, and I am one of two employees in Maine.

At the Business Network I am the Director of Industry Education. I love what I do because I get to have candid discussions with businesses leaders, elected officials, and local stakeholders from across the U.S about offshore wind. I have the job I do today because of Maine's early leadership in offshore wind, world class research, and having attended the University of Maine.

I am testifying against LD 101 - An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development.

Passing LD101 would hurt Maine. It would hurt families by denying them access to good-paying jobs in coastal communities, cripple our university at the forefront of monumental innovation, and it would keep us further away from our need to tackle climate change.

I have two points of opposition to this bill and one additional point for thought.

First, prohibiting OSW in Maine will inhibit economic growth and opportunity. Pilot, research, and commercial offshore wind projects will directly bring ten's to hundreds of millions of dollars to Maine's maritime economy and hundreds of millions indirectly. We should not prohibit this economic opportunity.

Second, there is a robust state process and a federal process for controlling offshore wind development. This process already prohibits permitting offshore wind farms in many areas reserved for other ocean usage, and heavily reviews its development in proposed areas for environmental and stakeholder concerns. We should be utilizing this process to ensure the best possible outcome for all of Maine's residents.

My point for thought is this. In the offshore wind industry first movers have an enormous advantage. Prohibiting Maine from permitting offshore wind projects in Maine waters will not prohibit the development of offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine. It will just exclude Maine voices from shaping how offshore wind is developed in the Gulf of Maine by other gulf states.

I'd like to conclude my remarks with an offer to this committee. Call me if you have questions about offshore wind. I am happy to talk about the technology, the business, the environmental science, and the socio-economic impacts. I've invested in offshore wind knowledge so that I can live and work in Maine. I'm here and a resource, so please let me know how I can help.

Thank you for this opportunity and your time today.

Best,
Ben