



Maine Lobstering Union

Local 207



5/4/2021

Senator Mark Lawrence, Representative Seth Berry and Distinguished Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Julie Eaton, and I am a commercial lobsterman/captain from Stonington. I have spent the past 38 years earning my living from Maine's ocean. I am writing this today as a representative of the Maine Lobstering Union Local 207 membership.

We are in support of L.D. 101-An Act to Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development.

Our ocean's ecosystem is and has always been a fragile one. We are active stewards of our ocean. Because we spend most of our lives on the water, we possess knowledge that can only be obtained from years spent on the ocean. We notice everything on the water, observe every change and issue. For instance, did you know that a thunder and lightning storm has an effect of the movement of lobsters or that the wind direction effects their feeding habits? These are just two exceedingly small examples of basic knowledge we have gained over many generations.

Through hard work and sacrifice, we have developed a sustainable fishery which is the envy of the world and provides the freshest and healthiest seafood to millions of people.

We believe that “green energy” is a good thing but not at the cost of our ocean’s well- being. Our ocean is not a science experiment! It has taken generations to achieve sustainability and balance in our waters. Once damaged, it may never be repaired.

It is true that many Maine lobstermen fish in State waters however those same fishermen travel with the lobsters into deeper waters following the catch in the fall and winter when the weather is the worst. Offshore windmills pose a significant hazard to navigation and the safety of our fishermen.

As a commercial diver, I have seen the destruction caused by dredging our ocean floor. It is heart breaking! Sea creatures are killed or worse, trapped under rocks from which they cannot escape. Vegetation where life once existed (which traps carbon), is stripped from the bottom. This cannot be our future. Our ocean, our people, our fishermen deserve better.

In an article by the Guardian dated April 29th by Jillian Ambrose and titled “Orsted says offshore UK windfarms need urgent repairs Operator says it may cost \$350 Million over two years to repair cable damage caused by seabed rocks,” it identifies just one issue with offshore wind. Closer to home, the Block Island wind farm will have to go offline all winter to rebury the powerline which is now exposed! Quoting from the article in National Wind Watch dated Feb.10, 2020, “The area that they’re in is a very dynamic area – a lot of waves, a lot of sediment movement – so there’s a lot of potential

for uncovering the cables,” Fugate told the Special Senate Task Force on Fisheries.

National Grid installed both cables in 2016 with a jet plow, a device that is towed along the seafloor and uses high-pressure water jets to dig trenches. It works well in sandy environments but couldn’t get deep enough in the rocky area off Crescent Beach.”

“While Orsted has promised to pay for repairs to its cable, National Grid has yet to do so with its cable, Fugate said. The state Public Utilities Commission is currently considering the issue and whether some costs will fall on ratepayers, he said.” End quote.

Offshore wind is not free. It is not green. It will cause lasting damage to our ocean’s ecology and our iconic lobster fishery. People who come to Maine on vacation all come to see the lobster men & women and their boats. You will never hear them say “Oh Dear, let’s go to Maine to see the windmills.”

Offshore wind will hurt our fishery and ocean, our tourism and having been proven to be far more expensive than the power we currently have, will hurt our people. There are better alternatives available to “going green” than by endangering our ocean and our fishery this way!

We ask you to stop this now before it is too late and SUPPORT L.D. 101.

Thank you for your attention to this bill. It is critically important to our fishery and to the health of our ocean. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all today, we will be available for the work session.

Sincerely,

Capt. Julie Eaton

Maine Lobstering Union

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