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Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
Testimony in Support

LD 101 "An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development"

Good afternoon Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Committee On Energy, Utilities and Technology. I am Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham, and I am here to proudly present LD 101 **An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development** for the people of Maine.

Recently the Portland Press Herald posted an editorial titled: "Our View: Lobster industry needs to contribute more than 'Crush Mills'"

Well get your notepad out, because here it is.

This offshore windmill debate is an issue that was put to bed in 2017. That was when the Maine Public Utilities Commission completed a 5 year study into the feasibility of offshore wind. The conclusion was that the cost was so far out of reach for the ratepayers that it was totally unfeasible. The findings of this extensive study were that the energy delivered from offshore wind would cost around $.22 cents per unit, compared to the current rate of $.03-$.04 cents per unit. In fact, of the main renewable energy technologies, offshore wind is the most expensive, far more so than solar power. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates the cost of offshore wind projects will average $115 per MWh. By comparison, the EIA (Energy Information Administration) estimates that an emissions-free, always-on, advanced nuclear plant entering service in 2026 will cost less than $70 per MWh, and won't require expensive battery storage.

Not only will it cost consumers billions of dollars more per year for electricity than if generated from more reliable nuclear and natural gas-fired generators, but the intermittent nature of offshore wind will require building vast quantities of battery storage, which is likely to cost hundreds of billions more, as well as depending on slave labor for the minerals to produce. This is to say nothing of the abundance of hydropower opportunities within the state, or the current plan to us Maine's western wilderness as an extension cord to run clean carbon free hydropower from Canada to Massachusetts. It boggles the mind that the state has just halted an attempt to tear out 4 hydropower dams on the Kennebec when it was revealed that state agencies had violated rules, and that the owners wanted to retain the dams and upgrade them to supply our state with a carbon free energy source that has low environmental impact, and a never ending green fuel supply.

In addition to forcing ratepayers to buy electricity at three to five times the average market price, Avangrid (Spain), Mitsubishi Corp (Japan), Shell Oil Corporation(Dutch) and other foreign corporations will also be showered with billions of US taxpayer dollars, based on estimated construction costs of over $5,000 per kilowatt, and the Biden administration's new 30% investment tax credit for offshore wind. All told, constructing 30,000 MW of offshore wind is likely to send $50 billion of U.S. taxpayer money to giant European corporations.

And for what? The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from building all of that offshore wind will be minuscule and will have no impact on world climate whatsoever. In fact, studies on cold-pooling warn that overdevelopment of offshore windmills could lead to increased warming in the Gulf of Maine.

In literature published by the University of Maine describing the potential benefits of offshore wind they characterize a mid-size commercial wind farm as one that produces 500mw and includes 64 turbines. If the 12 turbine "research array" requires 16 square miles than a mid-sized commercial farm with 64 turbines would require 85 square miles. In 2009 Maine's Ocean Energy Task Force released a Final Report that set a goal of 5,000mw of offshore wind power generated in Maine by 2030. So in order to generate 5,000mw of power you would need 10 mid-sized 500mw wind farms which would require a total of 850 square miles. The whole of Casco Bay is approximately 200 square miles. So where in State waters are we going to be able to give up an area 4 times the size of Casco Bay without it destroying the sustainability of our fisheries? The entirety of state waters is 3,000 square miles.

The list of likely negative impacts from offshore windmills is extensive. Following is an extremely abridged list of some of these impacts and areas of concern:

- Vibrations and noise from turbine construction and operation are detrimental to marine animals
- Cold pooling - Rotating turbine blades and their bases in the water disrupt the natural cycling of water temperature that fish and shellfish depend on to migrate, breed and flourish, thus driving fish out of vast areas along the coast
- EMFs (Electro-Magnetic Fields) disturb fish migration patterns as well as catastrophic impact on marine mammals
- Loss of commercial and recreational fishing grounds
- Radar & Navigational Hazards
- Coast Guard high seas rescue issues and potential interference

Environmental Hazards

- Disposal of turbine blades - having only a 15-25 year lifespan - after which each 175' foot non-recyclable blade gets buried in the ground
- Leakage of hazardous materials - oil leakage from turbines is not uncommon
- EMFs (Electro-Magnetic Fields) - safety concern for coastal residents and wildlife
- In considering the comprehensive cost of offshore wind turbine production (manufacturing, transportation and installation), we must also consider the carbon footprint involved in all these processes
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Wildlife and their habitats

- Negative effects to marine mammals and sea life during construction (cable trenching/anchor placement)
- Negative effects on protected species - Endangered Right Whales & Endangered Piping Plovers, Roseate Terns, Least Terns, and threatened Arctic Terns, Atlantic Puffins, Harlequin Ducks, and Razorbills
- Harm or death to birds (estimated up to 500k/year in the USA), bats, fish, dolphins, sharks, sea turtles, whales, etc.

Negative impact on Tourism and Coastal Economies

- The turbines are projected to be 700' feet tall and wider than 2 football fields.
- Turbines will be visible from the beaches and negatively affect fishing (see above)
- Industrializing our natural ocean views will decrease tourism, affecting small and large business - everything from lobster roll stands to real estate sales
- Night skies will include blinking & continuous lighting (required for navigation) creating visual pollution

Financial Impact

- Electric rates will increase in Maine in order to absorb the cost of the project, which is totally unknown.
- Unproven number of permanent local jobs(most likely a very low number of permanent jobs)
- Turbines will never operate at a maximum efficiency(during long periods without wind turbines must be turned by diesel power engines to prevent blade warping)
- The Maine grid is currently incapable of handling a new flow of energy. Without having both short term and long duration storage solutions (technology isn't there yet) as well as an updated grid the development of offshore wind farms faces major transmission issues. The development's cost will be a huge burden to ratepayers for the next 20+ years. Right now the return on investment is at this point very much unknown.
- Tens of thousands of Maine jobs are directly connected to commercial fishing.
- Tens of thousands of jobs are indirectly connected to commercial fishing including entire communities along the coast.
- Commercial fishing is directly or indirectly responsible for over $1 billion dollars in economic revenue activity in Maine.

The Atlantic coast contains some of the most productive fisheries in the world. BOEM is supposed to work with fisheries interests to ensure offshore wind development does not adversely affect habitat and the livelihood of fishermen. In fact, in December of last year, the Department of the Interior issued a detailed memo stating that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act prohibits offshore wind approvals if a project would interfere with fishing. However, just a few weeks ago, the administration reversed those findings.

It is time to put a permanent halt to offshore wind development. If at some point in the future there is strong and convincing evidence that this energy would be a worthwhile

endeavor to benefit the people of Maine, then we could have that debate then. But right now, this is a science project proposing to turn the Gulf of Maine, her marine life, sea mammals, and ocean bottom into a test tube for the benefit of foreign corporations. Right now, all the evidence, all the science, says NO.

I'm just going to leave you with this final truth. Environmentally, economically, and culturally this offshore windmill proposal is as bad as it gets. Maine has too many environmentally friendly, carbon free, green options for energy to be pushing a destructive idea like this. We have endless hydropower potential, both domestically and from our neighbors in Canada. We have the potential for a Nuclear power source such as the one that powered half of Maine in the past. We also have the potential for clean natural gas powered electricity. We also have potential for land based wind and solar. All these options have higher rewards, and less environmental damage than offshore wind.

Listen to the people of Maine. Vote OTP on LD 101.

Thank you for your consideration. I will answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham