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Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

Barry J. Hobbins
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

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Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate and I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 101 “An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development.”

The Office of the Public Advocate has long supported Maine’s effort to make Maine an international hub for the building of the University of Maine’s patented technology. This effort has been endorsed by multiple governors, numerous legislatures, scores of institutions and businesses and thousands of Maine consumers. Floating offshore wind is in the public interest, as it will obtain local high load factor renewables at reasonable cost and, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, will continue to have decreasing costs.

I know these facts because I served on the 2008 Ocean Energy Task Force, sponsored the 2010 Ocean Energy Act and chaired this very committee in the 124th Legislature when we enacted the Ocean Energy Act. We amended the Act, as I said in the Senate debate to “address all the concerns with the different stakeholder groups,” Legislative Record – Senate, Monday April 5, 2010, page 5-1745. This included the concerns of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association and others. With both Republicans and Democrats, in 2013 I cosponsored the Omnibus Energy Act and negotiated a related bill to keep the promise alive of offshore wind in Maine, by Maine. Now, 11 years later as the Public Advocate, I still acknowledge the concerns regarding offshore

wind development of the lobstering industry here in Maine. Lobster men and women are integral to Maine's economy and we understand the difficulties they have faced in recent years.

However, the OPA believes the potential opportunities of offshore wind development are significant and will provide benefits to the people of Maine for years to come and an outright ban on future projects will not help the Maine ratepayer.

In February, I submitted an Op-ed to the Portland Press Herald ([link](#)) in support of the Governor's offshore wind initiatives in which I stated, "...this is the right course to protect Maine consumers from higher costs in the long term, safeguard our coastal communities from rising sea levels and mitigate the rapid warming of the Gulf of Maine." With all due respect, I urge the Committee not to pass LD 101, and to stay the course Maine has set. Let's create that international hub in Maine for floating offshore wind. Let's protect the Gulf of Maine from haphazard development. Let's anchor those good jobs here in Maine. Offshore wind development is a key component in achieving Governor Mills' ambitious climate action goals and an outright ban on development would set Maine back for years to come.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 101, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate