



Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

May 4, 2021

RE: LD 1619, An Act To Establish a Moratorium on Offshore Wind Power Projects in Maine's Territorial Waters

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1619, An Act To Establish a Moratorium on Offshore Wind Power Projects in Maine's Territorial Waters, on behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members and supporters.

Maine's territorial waters are the waters within 3 nautical miles of shore, which is part of an area thought to contain the highest concentration of species within the marine environment. Maine Audubon supports this legislation because it demonstrates the Mills Administration commitment to making offshore wind coexist with existing uses of the ocean. There is incredible promise in offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine, particularly in deeper water where wind energy resources are the highest, to power our homes and our economy with renewable, locally-produced energy, but development must be respectful and considerate of other offshore users, especially the fishing industry. By placing a moratorium on offshore wind development in state waters, where the majority of Maine's iconic lobstering occurs, this bill would ensure that conflicts are minimized and offshore wind development occurs where the best wind energy resources are found.

More than a century of burning fossil fuels has altered the chemical composition of our atmosphere, changing the climate we are accustomed to and throwing the natural world out of balance. Mainers are seeing these changes firsthand, as evidenced by scientifically-measured +3 degree warming trend in the state since 1895, a growing season that has lengthened by about 16 days since 1950, and a Gulf of Maine that is warming faster than almost any other water body on Earth.

We need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. At the top of the list of ways to achieve this is to convert to electric energy powered by renewable sources. The potential for offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine, especially floating offshore wind, is far greater than any other source, with an estimated 156 gigawatts of energy available for conversion per year. To put that in perspective, that is more than 70 times the amount of electricity used by the entire state of Maine in an entire year.

The opportunity to produce such a large amount of clean, renewable energy locally cannot be ignored, and deserves full study. We understand that the buildout of floating offshore wind -- still an experimental technology -- would have impacts on both environmental resources and human use of the oceans, but we owe it to ourselves and to future Mainers to make every effort to meet our climate goals. Advancements in locally developed and deployed floating offshore wind technology will also provide employment and economic benefits to the state and will provide Maine with the opportunity to lead the nation into the future.

Maine Audubon is eager to continue to work with the state to better understand the potential impacts of floating offshore wind turbines on migratory birds and other wildlife in the Gulf of Maine, and incorporate what we learn into future siting and operation decisions. We owe it to ourselves, our wildlife, and future generations to move forward with this promising technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1619.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nick Lund', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nick Lund
Outreach and Network Manager
Maine Audubon