

LD 101 - An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development

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Honorable Committee Chairs Senator Lawrence & Representative Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on *LD 101 – An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development*.

Acadia Center is a non-profit, research and advocacy organization incorporated in Maine and committed to advancing the clean energy future by offering real-world solutions to the climate crisis. Acadia Center tackles complex problems, identifies clear recommendations for reforms, and advocates to create significant change that supports a low-carbon economy across the Northeast which can then be a model for application elsewhere. Acadia Center identifies regional, state, and local improvements that will dramatically reduce carbon pollution and improve quality of life throughout the Northeastern United States. Acadia Center strongly opposes LD 101.

Acadia Center Opposes LD 101

A February 2018 NREL (National Renewable Energy Laboratory) Report, *Offshore Wind Resource, Cost, and Economic Potential in the State of Maine*, finds the following: 1) Maine has a world-class offshore wind resource. It has high average wind speeds and a large quantity of offshore wind resources. In principle, Maine could use its offshore wind resource to supply offshore wind power to serve its in-state electric load as well as electricity markets in adjacent states such as New Hampshire and Massachusetts. 2) To use its most economically viable offshore wind resource sites, Maine would need to deploy floating offshore wind technologies which, although they are advancing rapidly around the globe, are currently in a pre-commercial stage of development.¹

Like any new energy endeavor initially, there are concerns regarding Maine's offshore wind industry, including whether fishing grounds or tourism might be negatively impacted. However, the expected technological, economic, and workforce development benefits of Maine's offshore wind sector are incredibly compelling. The State is taking a measured and balanced approach to this nascent industry development. As a balanced approach, Governor Janet Mills has proposed a research array to test and research floating offshore wind technology and is coordinating with Maine's fishing industry and other critical stakeholders to study potential economic and environmental impacts and how the State can best benefit from its ample wind resources offshore. As a measured approach, Governor Mills proposed a 10-year moratorium on any new wind development in state waters up to three miles off the coast, keeping the focus on projects in federal waters. *LD 1619 - An Act To Establish a Moratorium on Offshore Wind Power Projects in Maine's Territorial Waters* appears to be a more prudent and rational way to support the development of offshore wind while encouraging ample stakeholder engagement. An outright ban is unnecessary and counterproductive.

If Maine is to research, develop, and deploy innovative renewable energy technologies and compete on a global scale, the State must make commitments to attract financial investment, improve the environment, and achieve energy

¹ Musial, Walter, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, *Offshore Wind Resource, Cost, and Economic Potential in the State of Maine*, February 2018.

security. Maine's offshore wind industry is emerging as a potential competitive market advantage in the energy sector, with the possibility of developing skilled labor, new technologies, new product lines, and new projects. The Maine Aqua Ventus (MAV) project is an example of an innovative energy technology project that has invested years and millions of dollars to research, develop, and deploy this technology. The MAV project has competed for limited federal dollars against other states and projects and won.

The competition for the next generation of offshore wind technologies is even fiercer on the global level, especially in Europe and Asia. The State should be nurturing, not shunning, this industry. Maine has incredible natural energy resources that are and can be an engine of its economy. The State and Federal governments have developed policies and programs that have delivered financial investment to this industry. Floating offshore wind has the potential to provide reliable, sustainable jobs for years to come. The State should continue to support the development of the offshore wind industry in Maine and ensure that the rules of offshore wind development are consistent and supportive – and predictable – to help build a strong and competitive Maine-based offshore wind industry and supply chain.

In addition to the economic benefits of offshore wind, the environmental imperative to move forward is persuasive. Climate change is the most serious threat to Maine's economy and environment and harnessing offshore wind is critical to addressing it and protecting our State for generations to come. By harnessing the wind power from a very small fraction of the vast ocean waters, we can power Maine's economy and enable the clean electrification of heating and transportation. The Gulf of Maine is warming faster than 99% of the world's oceans. If we don't act now, the environmental conditions in the Gulf of Maine will do more harm to Maine's fishing industry than any wind turbine could or ever will.

Why would we want to kill a potential economic and environmental juggernaut like offshore wind? The previous Administration tried, and even drove away a global, multi-billion-dollar company in the process. But the winds blowing off Maine's coastline are strong and so are the economic forces and environmental benefits of offshore energy.

Acadia Center looks forward to working with the Committee to ensure that there are limited roadblocks to fulfil the promise of offshore wind energy in Maine.

For more information:

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