

Jeff Putnam

May 3, 2021

Joint standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, Distinguished members of the Committee
I am writing to you today to ask for your support for LD 101: an act to prohibit offshore wind energy development.

I am very concerned with the recent rush to develop areas of the Gulf of Maine with wind turbines and the transmission cables. I am a lifelong fisherman from Chebeague Island in Casco Bay. I grew up lobstering in Casco Bay and like many others have have had to venture further offshore in recent years to support my family and stay in my coastal community. The lobster population has moved further from shore in the last couple of decades. We all think of the iconic image of a lobster boat hauling traps next to a rocky shoreline with evergreen trees in the background as the way the Maine lobster industry looks, but in reality myself and many others spend more time outside of the bays making our living than near shore. We are a mobile fleet that has adapted to the shift in lobster population by moving traps to deeper waters and the ridges that dot the waters of the Gulf of Maine. We work alongside tuna fisherman, scallop boats, trawl fishermen and gillnetters, each group harvesting the fresh seafood that feeds our country.

Windmill production in the Gulf of Maine would directly threaten our ability to harvest seafood in the areas where it is plentiful. The State of Maine and the offshore wind development companies have led us to believe that we need to choose either losing part of our fishing heritage to industrialized wind farms or put the climate in further peril with fossil fuel energy production. I disagree with that premise. The State of Maine has a great record of clean energy production with solar, hydro, biofuels and onshore windmills, we should continue to promote those sources to power our future and leave a cleaner environment to our next generation.

Offshore windmills have no place off of the coast of Maine, there is not a situation where Maine fisherman can cohabitate the areas where windmills would be placed. We will be displaced from the fishing grounds of the Gulf of Maine and the dynamics of our coastal communities would be forever altered. Please consider the small family business fishermen that depend on the Gulf of Maine to catch our sustainable seafood when you vote on this bill.

Sincerely yours,
Jeff Putnam