



## **Testimony in Opposition to LD 101: An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development**

Hannah Read, Clean Energy Associate with Environment Maine, May 4, 2021

Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Berry and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology;

My name is Hannah Read and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Environment Maine and our thousands of members across the state in strong opposition to LD 101: An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development. If passed, this bill would prevent offshore wind from being developed in Maine, and thus severely limit the state in its ability to effectively transition to clean, renewable energy and respond to the effects of climate change.

Powering our lives with clean, renewable offshore wind will allow Maine to build a healthier and greener future, and passage of this bill would rob us of that opportunity. Maine has some of the best offshore wind resources in the world, and is uniquely positioned to take advantage of them. Our report *Offshore Wind for America* shows that we have the highest ratio of offshore wind potential to the amount of electricity we use of any state in the country. We could power our current electricity demand 35 times over with offshore wind alone, and even tapping a small percentage of that potential would be a game changer for our energy system. Tapping just three percent of the offshore wind resources in the Gulf of Maine could fully electrify our heating and transportation, and we need the chance to take advantage of that opportunity.

Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and transitioning to renewable energy is also one of Maine's best weapons in the fight against global warming. Unfortunately, Maine still produces and consumes much of our state's energy from fossil fuels. We can have healthier communities right now, and a livable future for generations to come—but to get there, we need to transform the way we produce and consume energy. That means supporting and fostering the development of offshore wind farms instead of throwing up obstacles against them.

All Mainers stand to benefit from offshore wind development, and that includes our fishing community. The negative impacts on our fisheries from climate change would be far, far worse than any impacts from offshore wind turbines, and we need to take an active role in combating those effects by transitioning to renewable energy. If we are to meet our 2030 and 2040 emissions reductions as outlined in the Climate Action Plan, offshore wind will need to play a large part in getting us there. If this bill is passed, we are

left without one of our most valuable energy assets and will make it incredibly hard to achieve these goals and leave the state more vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme weather events that damage our infrastructure.

The success of offshore wind has already been proven around the world. Millions of homes are powered by offshore wind turbines spinning in Europe and Asia as we speak. By 2025, turbines are expected to be 20 times more powerful than when they were first deployed in 1991, and the more efficient they become the less overall area we will need to support them.

All Mainers need clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and a liveable climate. In a greener, healthier world, we would rely only on sources of energy that are clean, renewable, and leave less environmental damage in their wake. Offshore wind checks all of those boxes, and we cannot discard it before it has even been given a chance.

We cannot afford to fall behind our neighbors when Maine has the chance to become a leader in renewable energy, and discounting offshore wind through this bill would be a serious mistake. Massachusetts recently increased their offshore wind commitments and more is on the way in our other New England states. The Biden Administration has also demonstrated their commitment to developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030, and Maine stands to play a big part in helping the nation reach that goal. If the bill passes, we would not be able to do so.

Offshore wind is a proven resource that could revolutionize our energy system, making it more resilient and bringing benefits to all Mainers. We deserve to power our lives with energy that fosters a healthy future and resilient energy system that we can count on. It makes no sense to prohibit the state from pursuing that opportunity through offshore wind, and we must endeavor to keep our renewable energy options open instead of shutting the door on them.

We respectfully urge you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 101.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Read  
Clean Energy Associate  
Environment Maine