



Testimony before the

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

By Rob Wood, Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy

May 4, 2021

Re: LD 101 – An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Rob Wood and I am the Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to testify **in opposition to LD 101**, An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. We have been working for several decades with Maine's communities and natural resource users to conserve forests, reconnect rivers to the sea, and rebuild depleted fish populations in the Gulf of Maine.

Climate change is now affecting these ecosystems and communities in significant ways, including wildlife species and resource users in the Gulf of Maine, where waters are warming faster than 99 percent of the world's oceans. Addressing climate change requires reducing our collective dependence on fossil fuels, which in turn requires the responsible deployment of a diversified portfolio of new, well-sited clean energy resources. Simply put, LD 101 would take one of these resources completely off the table for the state of Maine.

LD 101 would also specifically prohibit offshore wind pilot and demonstration projects whose primary purpose is data collection and research. As Maine plots a path forward on clean energy, it is essential that we take a science-based approach, carefully balancing development to minimize impacts on Maine's communities and our environment. Offshore wind research can help the State better understand the impacts and benefits of this emerging technology.

Our hope is that rather than prohibiting offshore wind, Maine will take an approach to offshore wind that is centered on inclusive stakeholder processes that seek to minimize impacts on sensitive marine habitats and conflicts with marine resource users.

Thank for you the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.