

Jim Wotton
Lobster Management Zone D

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology.

The council members of Lobster Management Zone D are writing to ask for your support on LD 101: An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development.

We have serious concerns about the movement towards industrialization of the Gulf of Maine for offshore wind, both in state and federal waters. LD 101 would be a step towards protecting the natural resources and fishing heritage that has allowed the coastal communities that comprise Zone D to thrive. Offshore wind development will displace the hard-working and conservation-minded fishermen that have become the economic backbone of the working waterfront along the entire coast of Maine.

You might look at the Gulf of Maine as a vast open area of water but that is not all that we see. We see the ocean in its entirety, what is on the surface, what's under the water, and we are familiar with the ocean bottom.

Virtually every piece of hard bottom, every gravel bank, and every mud hole has a name. These spots have names because they have been visited by generations of fishermen from all along the coast, and not just Maine, but all of New England. These spots have a place in a fisherman's history and culture because they are passed down from generation to generation. When we fish these spots, we are not just catching seafood, but connecting with our ancestors and all of the fishermen before us.

We also have become familiar with the lines, rules, and restrictions that confine us. Zone lines divide and contain where we are able to fish and explore; gear requirement lines dictate how our traps must be configured, and now we are contending with a proposal to close a large area of the ocean to mid-coast lobstermen during the winter months because of hypothetical Northern Atlantic Right Whale entanglements.

We also stand with our fellow fishermen that will be directly affected by offshore wind - the groundfish boats that work the deeper waters, the scallop boats that many of us also own, the tuna fishermen that fish the shoals in the summer when we are not there, and the herring fishermen that we rely on for bait. There is hardly a square mile out there that is not used by one or more of the hard-working people that provide fresh, sustainable food for the people of Maine and the United States. The stance that the waters off Maine are better suited for the harvest of food than as a source of energy.

We understand and agree that there is an urgent need for renewable and reliable energy, but the displacement of a proven food source is not an acceptable solution to our energy needs. We look at ourselves as caretakers and stewards of the ocean and we believe it is our responsibility to protect its future for our children and their children to be able to experience and enjoy.

We would also like to suggest the bill be amended to clarify that no permits or permitting be granted for cables associated with any offshore wind projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

If you have questions or would like more information provided for your work session we would be glad to assist.

Michael Dawson, - District 1 - New Harbor, Round Pond (Chair)

Fernald Poland, - District 2- Round Pond, Muscongus

Shannon Harvey, - District 2- Bremen, Medomack, Waldoboro

James Wotton, - District 3- Friendship (Vice-Chair) 207 592 5817

Ernest Wallace, - District 3- Friendship

Brian Fellows, - District 4- Cushing, Thomaston

Joshua Miller, - District 6- St George, Tenants Harbor

Erik Waterman, - District 7- Spruce Head, South Thomaston

Douglas McLennan, - District 7- Spruce Head, South Thomaston

Kevin Glover, - District 8- Owls Head

Joshua Conover, - District 10- Rockport, Camden, Lincolnville, Islesboro

Wayne Canning, - District 11- Northport, Belfast, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Prospect, Bucksport, Orland, Sandy Point, S.Penobscot, Castine, W. Brooksville, as far as Cape Rosier

Ryan Post, - District 12- Big Green Island, Little Green Island, Metinic Island, Monhegan Island