



**Testimony before the
Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee
Sean Mahoney
Conservation Law Foundation
May 4, 2021**

**Re: LD 1619 – An Act to Establish a Moratorium on Offshore Wind Power Projects in
Maine’s Territorial Waters**

Good morning Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. My name is Sean Mahoney, Executive Vice President for Conservation Law Foundation, testifying neither for nor against LD 1619 An Act to Establish A Moratorium on Offshore Wind Power Projects in Maine’s Territorial Waters. CLF uses the law, science, and economics to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the climate crisis here in Maine and across New England.

As Maine’s climate action plan makes clear, meeting the climate crisis here in Maine will require moving away from oil and methane gas not only as a source for electricity but also as the sources for both heating and cooling our buildings and for transporting people and goods. Doing so will require a transformation of our current electric system, in terms of how we generate that electricity as well as how it is transmitted and stored.

As recognized in the preamble of LD 1619, the development of offshore wind in the waters of the Gulf of Maine holds great economic and environmental promise. It also raises questions concerning the impacts to habitat, fishery resources and impacts on existing uses of our public commons. It is precisely in part to answer these questions that the Legislature and regulatory agencies have approved of a demonstration project comprised of 1 floating offshore wind turbine led by our flagship University of Maine in the waters off Monhegan Island. And it is also why Governor Mills and her administration are pursuing the development of a larger research array of up to 12 offshore wind turbines in the federal waters of the Gulf of Maine. CLF strongly supports both of those efforts.

LD 1619 is clearly intended to serve the interests of Maine’s fishing community, particularly its lobster industry. We appreciate the practical reality that under the current circumstances and regulatory structure, the likelihood of developing offshore wind projects in Maine’s territorial waters is unlikely and therefore do not oppose LD 1619. Nonetheless, CLF cannot support the legislation itself because we believe that a blanket 10-year moratorium ignores the reality of the rapid change of technology in the field of renewable energy that we have witnessed in just the last 5 years. Additionally, we are concerned by the prospect that LD 1619 could serve as a precedent for other groups with an economic, recreational or aesthetic interest at stake to seek a

moratorium on development of the necessary infrastructure to meet Maine's obligations under its climate action plan. For those reasons, we are neither for, nor against LD 1619. Thank you.