

May 11, 2021

Re: Business Network for Offshore Wind Testimony in Support of LD 336 – An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry

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

My name is Benjamin Brown I am the Director of Industry Education for the Business Network for Offshore Wind, I live in Gray, Maine and I am testifying in favor of LD 336 on behalf of the Business Network.

The Network is the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on the development of the U.S. offshore wind industry and its supply chain. Since 2013, the Network has brought together business and government, both domestically and internationally, to educate and to prepare companies and small businesses to enter the offshore wind market. The Network uses the voice of its members to educate and support federal, state, and local policies to advance the development of the U.S. offshore wind industry. The Network empowers its members with the education, tools, and connections necessary to participate in this booming industry. If you are interested in learning more about the Business Network, please visit our website here: <https://www.offshorewindus.org/>

I have three points of support for this bill and a comment that I would like to share.

We Need Data and Lived Experience to Integrate Floating OSW into Federal Waters

The establishment of lease areas and permitting permissions on the outer continental shelf by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is informed by stakeholder comments and the permitting decisions are driven by data. This bill is supporting the creation of a research project in federal waters that will allow Maine, BOEM, and all stakeholders to collect the data needed to answer the questions regarding what are the environmental and socio-economic impacts of floating offshore wind and then use these data driven answers to inform if and how a commercial floating offshore wind project should be sited and permitted.

For those who would like to learn more about how BOEM permits offshore energy leases and about the data they have collected I have included a link to the BOEM renewable energy page in my submitted testimony here: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy>

Best Practice is Being Followed

We have seven offshore turbines here in the US, only two of them are in federal waters, and those two turbines are part of a research project in a research lease. They are being used to collect data on behalf of the State of Virginia, BOEM, Dominion Energy, and all stakeholders about the environmental and socio-economic impacts of offshore wind. Once again, the permitting of offshore wind farms is driven by data and this bill supports the same process that has been used

to inform the permitting of commercial fixed bottom farms. Only in this case, we are talking about floating offshore wind.

For those who would like to learn more about the project and the process I have included a link to the CVOW website in my submitted comments here. <https://coastalvawind.com/>

Positive Economic and Industrial Impact

This bill will have a positive economic and industrial impact in Maine because it will make Maine the first mover in U.S. floating offshore wind. The first offshore wind project was constructed in Rhode Island in 2016. State, federal, and private investment followed Rhode Island's leadership and as a result the first offshore wind ports, vessels, and supply chain was built in Rhode Island and is now servicing the rest of the U.S.

We have a chance to do that here. This research array will seed the investment needed to build out the assets and a supply chain that will support the project but will also be used by the rest of the global offshore wind industry. This research array will be a boon to Maine manufacturing, Maine ports, Maine boat building, Maine vessel operators, and Maine labor both on and offshore.

If members of the committee have questions or would like to discuss the industrial development of offshore wind here in the U.S., then please feel free to reach out to me.

My comment for this testimony is that Maine has a chance to take a leadership role in offshore wind development here in U.S. and I believe we should hold true to our State motto of "Dirigo" and we should lead and take advantage of this opportunity.

I'd like to conclude my remarks with an offer to this committee. Call me if you have questions about offshore wind. I am happy to talk about the technology, the business, the environmental science, and the socio-economic impacts. I've invested in offshore wind knowledge so that I can live and work here in Maine. I'm a national resource, but I'm here, so please let me know how I can help.

Thank you for this opportunity and your time today.

Best,

Ben Brown
Director of Industry Education
Business Network for Offshore Wind