



Town of Vinalhaven

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May 11, 2021

Re: LD 336

Dear Committee Members

Please accept these comments regarding LD 336: An Act To Encourage Research to Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry. We are neither for nor against LD 336, but we do have concerns.

Increased aquaculture leases, proposed right whale closures and potential wind turbine lease areas are shrinking the amount of bottom available, and rapidly so. As more and more ocean bottom is taken away from commercial fishing activities, competition for remaining areas will become more fierce and lead to less productivity for all. Maine lobster fishermen are recognized around the world for their conservation efforts and being stewards of their environment. Many of the laws and regulations that have sustained and grown our industry were introduced by fishermen who have long understood the importance of a positive relationship with the environment. People that are part of a long heritage of protecting the ocean must be given a voice to ensure its future success.

The lobster fishery makes up an overwhelming majority of the local economy either directly or indirectly for our community. The fishery not only supports those who directly work in it, but also supports other businesses, families, our school, and other various services. Many of the children in the school have parents who work on the water or waterfront. Local contractors and service providers are routinely hired by fishermen to work on homes and workshops. Our shops on Main Street rely heavily on summer tourism, many of whom are captivated by one of the last truly working waterfronts in the world.

The state's proposed research array and offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine needs to be reviewed and pursued with only the best interest of the commercial fishing industry in mind. We ask that you slow down, take the time to work with commercial fishermen and other ocean users. The leasing of Gulf of Maine waters for offshore wind is concerning because commercial fishermen do not have seats at the table. Without input from commercial fishermen, how is BOEM to know which areas are most critical to harvesters to maintain their businesses and way of life. Our fishermen want to be sure

their voices have a chance to be heard. We want state and local representatives that are on the Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force to communicate with the industry and communities to ensure our concerns are heard.

Vinalhaven's Board of Selectmen recognize that the State of Maine wants to be a leader in developing this new technology of offshore wind. For this to move forward without compromising valuable fishing grounds, thousands of jobs, and hundreds of millions of dollars to Maine's annual economy, we need to be represented at meetings. The Road Map that is being created will have space for the public to be involved and we hope there is significant effort to include all perspectives on this topic.

Sincerely,



Andrew Dorr
Town Manager