



Testimony in support of LD 336: An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry

Anya Fetcher, State Director of Environment Maine, May 11, 2021

Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Berry and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology;

My name is Anya Fetcher and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Environment Maine and our thousands of members across the state in strong support of LD 336: An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry. If passed, this legislation would authorize the Public Utilities Commission to pursue a contract for output of the Gulf of Maine Floating Offshore Wind Research Array. This bill would kick start the process for developing the research array and is necessary to move us forward on a timely track to pursue offshore wind in Maine.

We are already seeing the impacts of climate change here in Maine and around the world. The rapidly warming Gulf of Maine and ocean acidification, more frequent extreme weather events, shorter winters and drought conditions, rising sea levels -- these impacts affect all Maine communities. Our beautiful beaches and our ski slopes, diverse ecosystems off our coasts and in our untouched forests, the food we eat and the places we love, are all threatened by climate change. For these reasons and so many more, Maine cannot wait another second to act on climate.

If we're going to reach the energy and emissions goals put forth by Gov. Mills and the Maine Climate Council, we will need offshore wind energy. We simply cannot get there without it. When it comes to building a future built on clean, renewable energy that doesn't pollute our planet and ensures a liveable world for generations to come, offshore wind is a clear answer, and it stands more than ready to take on the challenge.

Timely development of offshore wind is of the utmost importance, and passage of this bill would ensure that we seize the opportunity to respond effectively to the devastating effects of climate change and not fall behind in the push for renewable energy. There are numerous steps yet to take before we can begin actually generating electricity from offshore wind, so passage of LD 336 now is necessary to put the process in motion.

We have a robust, almost absurdly abundant renewable resource blowing off our shores here in the Gulf of Maine, and we need to take advantage of it. Our recent report [*Offshore Wind for America*](#) showed that we could power our current electricity demand 35 times over with offshore wind alone. Perhaps even more impressively, in a future where we transition our state to run almost completely on electricity by 2050, offshore wind could still provide over 13 times our electricity demand. If we're to meet that future head-on, we need to take steps now to catalyze development of offshore wind, and that starts with the research array.

Ultimately, we need to use every possible and available resource to cut carbon emissions and slow the effects of climate change. This research array will give us the data we'll need to develop offshore wind effectively and with minimal impact on the environment and communities. The impacts of climate change will be vastly more devastating to coastal ecosystems than any potential impact offshore wind development might have. The longer we wait, the more we fall behind, and we all know, Maine Won't Wait.

We respectfully urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 336.

Sincerely,
Anya Fetcher
State Director
Environment Maine