

Grant Provost  
Brunswick

Good Morning Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and esteemed members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. My name is Grant Provost, I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7, I am a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Board and I sit on three Maine State Workforce Boards. The Maine State Construction Board, The Central Maine and Western Maine Workforce Board and the Maine State Workforce Board. I am a Member of the Maine State Building and Construction Trades Council and Chair the Council's Committee on Offshore Wind. I am here today in support of LD 336 An Act to Encourage Research to Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry.

This is an unprecedented moment for Maine in the history books. Just like the race to space there is a competitive race going on right now for a viable floating offshore wind turbine. The University of Maine has been working for over a decade on that very technology and has the first floating concrete design in the world. This is an amazing opportunity for Mainers to be the vocal point of an industry in its adolescence and to share that with the world. There are so many advantages the people of Maine can find in just the first 13 turbines forget about a commercial scale project or when our southern neighbors move to floating technology. Maine will hold first mover advantage and will be able to export that technology to the world. The first 13 turbines are going to create thousands of jobs here in the trades as well as up to 150 megawatts of clean energy for our homes, schools and businesses.

The research array stands to create a tremendous amount of economic activity for local communities throughout Maine. From the thousands of good paying jobs in the construction trades, to the jobs created by using local materials, and not to leave out the money hard working men and women will be putting back into the economy via spending their high wages locally. In local stores, shops and farms everyone benefits from high paying jobs especially when there is a lot of them. Small local business's can hire on more help as a consistent workload is brought on to their books bringing them up out of the crater Covid -19 has created. Offshore wind is a chance like we haven't seen in a long time here in Maine and we need to grab it before the option to do so eludes us. We have control over our State waters, we can not stop what happens in federal waters. If we falter at this pivotal moment it does not kill offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine it kills Maine's chance to benefit. You can see that on any map of the Gulf of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts are not too far away as that they couldn't serve as landing sights for a project in the Gulf of Maine. In this instance other states would receive the electricity, provide the labor and receive all the benefits. Getting this right now will serve generations of Mainers and will support a new industry right here in Maine.

Today we have legislation before us to make that very decision, and I hope we can come together for the right one. When we choose to move this bill on, we become the inventors of our own energy independence in turn creating thousands of good paying jobs for our friends and families. As I have mentioned in previous testimonies the job of tearing apart a new bold idea is easy, seeing it to fruition is the hard road. It is the road Maine can take to becoming leaders in the world, it is also the road to a carbon neutral future for generations of Mainers to come. That is why urge this committee to vote ought to pass.