



May 11, 2021

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair
The Hon. Seth Berry, Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
State House
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 336, “An Act To Encourage Research to Protect the Gulf of Maine and to Continue Creation of a Maine Floating Offshore Wind Industry”

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and members of the EUT Committee:

On behalf of New England Aqua Ventus, I am testifying in support of L.D. 336, “**An Act To Encourage Research to Protect the Gulf of Maine and to Continue Creation of a Maine Floating Offshore Wind Industry**,” sponsored by Senator Lawrence.

New England Aqua Ventus, LLC (NEAV) is a joint venture between Diamond Offshore Wind, a subsidiary of Diamond Generating Corporation, and RWE Renewables, two of the largest companies in offshore wind worldwide.

Partnering with the University of Maine, NEAV is managing all aspects of permitting, construction and assembly, deployment and ongoing operations for the floating offshore wind technology demonstration project near Monhegan Island. Diamond and RWE, with years of collective offshore energy experience and success, will invest more than \$100 million to build the project and help demonstrate the technology at full scale.

Both companies see floating offshore wind as the next phase of offshore wind development around the world. This is particularly evident in Maine – where virtually all offshore wind will be on floating foundations. This is why NEAV is here, investing in Maine.

NEAV will work with the University of Maine to commercialize its world-class floating foundation technology, custom-designed for creating local jobs, beginning with the demonstration project near Monhegan. We emphasize the jewel that Dr. Habib Dagher has created within the University of Maine. The design capabilities are world-renowned. The testing facilities are world-class. It has one of the top wind/wave test facilities used to test and optimize designs. The University’s unfettered access to this asset allows it to refine its designs in ways others cannot. Its blade testing facility is a marvel. The University is training the next generation of offshore wind experts. I urge legislators to visit this facility if you have not already seen it.

NEAV's goal is to commercialize the University's technology, use it in the Gulf of Maine, and deploy it around the world.

NEAV wants to work with the State of Maine in a fashion that builds an offshore wind industry with all attendant jobs, and help Maine foster offshore wind development that enables co-existence of offshore wind alongside heritage industries like lobstering. We strongly believe that in order for offshore wind to be implemented at scale, this co-existence must be demonstrated – not just discussed. While the Monhegan project is intended to demonstrate that the University of Maine's technology works, the Research Array is intended to demonstrate how offshore wind farms work in the Gulf of Maine with all the other users of the Gulf. The Research Array creates an opportunity to conduct research that a single turbine does not allow.

As we got deeper into development in Maine, it became clear that there are two competing drives at play in the Gulf of Maine. Go slow (or don't go at all) as preferred by the fishing industry, and go fast/go big, as preferred by developers and many policy makers seeking to address climate change. NEAV observed that concept of the Research Array balances these two objectives:

- **Protection:** The state has a desire to protect its fishing industries and can best do so with full engagement in the details of what it really means for fishermen to work within and near wind farms. The lessons learned at a small scale can then be used to inform prudent development of future commercial scale wind farms evaluating co-existence not just with fishing, but with all manner of living creatures in the Gulf. Co-existence is not a buzz word, it is the actual goal.
- **Acceleration:** The state also has a goal of fostering offshore wind development to achieve its climate goals. In the end, based on prudent empirical observation of a handful of wind turbines in the water, and consequent development of best practices, larger scale projects can be developed within an arena that has had years of stakeholder involvement setting the standard for how projects are implemented to allow co-existence. This will help the eventual larger projects individually get permitted faster and get built in a way that has less of an impact on fisheries.

This “go slow to go fast” philosophy is best exemplified by what happened in Germany over the past 15 to 20 years. Germany spent years planning siting, ports and coordinated transmission. Germany – as the world's biggest exporter - needed to ensure offshore wind development did not choke shipping in and out of its ports. In the early years, there was lots of criticism that it was going too slow. Now, it is a leading nation in offshore wind. And, Germany became the home of the first “zero-subsidy” price for offshore wind power. That is what the State of Maine can do for offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine – create a path to get it right and reasonably priced.

To achieve this goal, the State of Maine needs to act now. This industry is upon the Gulf of Maine. Without the State creating a path to best co-existence practices via the Research Array, it will have little influence over the industry's development. This opportunity will not be here in another year or two. Action captures jobs and protects fishermen. Inaction just exposes them to risk and it clearly lets the jobs go to other states.

NEAV is ready, willing and able to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in Maine in a way that helps Maine achieve its goals.

Enacting LD336 keeps Maine on track to achieve its goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter.

Sincerely,



Chris Wissemann
New England Aqua Ventus