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Woodsome Testimony on LD 336

L.D. 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. I am Senator David Woodsome, and I have the honor of representing the towns of Cornish, Limerick, Newfield, Parsonsfield, Sanford, Shapleigh, and Waterboro all in York County. As a former member of this committee, I wish we could be together in person so I could properly pay my respects in the traditional manner, but that will have to wait for another day.

I am here today in support of L.D. 336, An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry, a bill that is necessary for us to take the next step on a plan that has been more than a decade in the making. This plan, which started with Governor Baldacci and his Ocean Energy Task Force, was sustained by efforts on behalf of the University of Maine by Governor LePage and brought to the present moment by Governor Mills as the Gulf of Maine is being targeted for development by the federal government and states to our south. This remarkable plan has had the support of the Legislature, including bipartisan leadership support, and the people of Maine, with an enacted bill in 2009, a vote of the people on a bond in 2010, and a key 2013 enactment made possible by Governor LePage.

I have been able to participate in this effort as a member of this committee, but also as the sponsor of what became 2019 Resolves Chapter 87, signed by Governor Mills and which is only the most recently enacted legislation in Maine's plan for Offshore Wind. At the time I said that legislation was about Maine government keeping its word. Today's bill is part of that word being our bond. And I strongly believe that it is the right thing to do at this time. Maine will be swamped by larger states and the federal government in the race to place offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine unless we provide clear leadership through establishing a research array in federal waters first. That way we can slow down the race to allow us to make sure of the

careful integration of offshore wind alongside Maine's oceanic resources and the people who work with those resources. Governor Mills and Energy Director Burgess have dug in on the hard work of this next step, hiring nationally qualified staff into the GEO to guide us through the federal process and ensure the process serves Maine and not the other way around. Their selection of an experienced offshore wind developer to fund the research array as well as the studies conducted by UMaine and other researchers will be invaluable – and exactly what we need to make sure the array is brought in on-time and under budget.

Unlike other renewable energy, Offshore Wind brings the promise of developing a shore-side industry – facilities for constructing the concrete hulls, using Maine concrete; fabrication and assembly facilities; operations and maintenance facilities, and ports used for these activities. Deploying a research array as proposed by this bill gives Maine a multi-year head start over all the states who border the Gulf of Maine. Maine already has the best natural ports for work in the Gulf of Maine – the research array will give us the best infrastructure as well. This points the way towards long term success of Maine.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for Maine acting on its decades long plan for offshore wind by enacting L.D. 336. Thank you.