

**Testimony from *Jiwana Soleimani*, in Support of L.D. 1895, "*An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources*"**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is *Jiwana Soleimani* and I'm here today to speak in favor of L.D. 1895. I work for Gateway Community Services Maine as the Program Coordinator for the Color of Climate, a NASA funded program dedicated to teaching climate literacy, and reside in South Portland, Maine.

I am in favor of L.D. 1895 because as a Kurdish person, one of the largest displaced Indigenous populations in the world, I grew up with a strong relationship to the environment and its operations in relation to my identity. Though I am not indigenous to Maine, my cultural ties to the catering of the land we reside on informed my perspective on the climate crisis here heavily. In the limited amount of time I have been alive - I have bore witness to the massive changes within our climate year by year. I see how this disproportionately affects indigenous and BIPOC populations and am witness to how it motivates us in particular to do the heavy lifting when it comes to environmental justice work.

That being said, I believe that L.D. 1895 is a chance to bring in a level of equity we need to renewable energy, and would give access to Maine's marginalized populations, who are frequently at higher risk of being impacted by the climate crisis, to use that motivation for the betterment of our quality of life. I believe it will also be a benefit to our economy, and create good quality job opportunities for many who are seeking it - and would also improve our quality of life in reducing the cost of living by converting to predominately renewable energy sources.

Marginalized peoples, especially our indigenous people, have already faced the brunt of the repercussions caused by a lack of protective standards in their careers - on top of encountering difficulties in their day to day lives because of climate issues. I believe strongly that protective standards are essential in preventing the continued exploitation of populations who are already excessively impacted by these circumstances.

For example, LD 1895 affirms its commitment to equity in the procurement process where employment or contracting opportunities for federally recognized tribes, environmental justice populations, women, minorities, veterans, LGBTQIA+ persons, disabled, those with formal involvement in the criminal justice system, and workers who are displaced by offshore wind are one weighted factor in determining winning bids for floating offshore wind. Another weighted factor is the inclusion of community benefits for environmental justice populations, including federally recognized Indian tribes. In that same process, the Governors Energy Office is directed to engage a stakeholder process to get input from, and consult with, federally recognized tribes and environmental justice populations.

I strongly urge that you take this into consideration, and hope that you vote in favor of L.D. 1895.