



May 20, 2023

Committee On Labor and Housing

RE: LD1818 – An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects

Co-Chairs Senator Tipping and Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, Islesboro Islands Trust (IIT) appreciates this opportunity to submit written comments regarding LD1818 – An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects. I apologize for not submitting comments during the May 9 hearing on this bill. As you all know, several bills speaking to offshore wind are before this Legislature resulting in some uncertainty on our part as to when to bring our concerns forward. I testified before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology last Thursday at which time it was suggested that we bring those concerns to this Committee.

IIT advances land conservation, ecosystem education and environmental advocacy in the Penobscot Watershed. For nearly 40 years, IIT's conservation, education, advocacy, and research demonstrate a commitment to protect the quality and integrity of the watershed, including a commitment to sweeping response to climate change. I am IIT's Executive Director, a life-long Mainer and graduate of the University of Maine. I also serve on Maine's Offshore Wind Port Advisory Group.

IIT applauds our State Government's vigorous response to climate change and offshore wind research. While LD1818 requires important worker protects that we support, unless explicitly captured by an amendment to LD1818, the bill as presented does not address the crucial importance of applying strong, proven environmental standards and existing state policies to siting and construction of manufacturing, assembling and launching facilities, called "port facilities relating to offshore wind power projects" here.

- (1) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022 report makes the case that conservation of fully functioning ecosystems offers a highly effective climate change response. For example, in this scientifically validated report we find the following:
 - a. "Conservation, improved management, and restoration of forests and other ecosystems offer the largest share of economic mitigation potential...;"
 - b. "Some options, such as conservation of high-carbon ecosystems (e.g., peatlands, wetlands, rangelands, mangroves and forests), deliver immediate benefits...;" and
 - c. "Conservation, protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and ocean ecosystems, together with targeted management to adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change reduces the vulnerability of biodiversity and ecosystem services to climate change (high confidence), reduces coastal erosion and flooding (high confidence), and could increase carbon uptake and storage if global warming is limited (medium confidence)."
- (2) Maine's Offshore Wind Roadmap includes the following at Objective E:



- a. "Maine is committed to protecting and preserving the Gulf's marine species, habitats, and wildlife, and to pursuing responsible development of offshore wind technology that advances renewable energy with as few adverse impacts as possible."
- (3) The Maine Climate Council's "Plan for Climate Action, Maine Won't Wait," says in part: "Climate change and development are harming Maine's natural and working lands and waters, which are key to the state achieving its carbon neutrality commitment by 2045. Protecting natural and working lands from development maintains their potential to draw back carbon from the atmosphere, as well as provide important co-benefits. Maine's coastal and marine areas also store carbon, while supporting our fishing, aquaculture, and tourism industries."
- (4) A United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program called RE-Power (see <https://www.epa.gov/re-powering>) urges repurposing out-dated or unused carbon-based energy facilities for renewable energy use. Mack Point (see attached map illustration) has been identified by EPA as a suitable site for this re-powering/renewable energy development program.
- (5) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) identify the Penobscot River and Bay as a nationally important habitat focus area. One objective of this Penobscot Watershed habitat focus cited by NOAA would, "Promote habitat restoration that results in benefits to water quality, watershed based recreation, and resilient coastal communities."

Therefore, we strongly urge amending "An Act Regarding Port Facilities Relating to Offshore Wind Power Projects" to include the following:

Developers of any offshore wind manufacturing, assembling, and/or launching facility, including any project by the State of Maine, shall: (1) ensure that the least environmentally damaging plan is pursued, (2) favor repurposing outdated industrial and/or energy sites for the proposed facility, (3) avoid damaging undeveloped and ecologically significant locations, and (4) consider impacts on wildlife and fisheries.

Thank you.

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LD 1818
Written testimony PDF attached