



Natural Resources Council of Maine

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May 17, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) to express our support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) *Dirigo Atlantic Floating Offshore Wind Port Project* application to the FY25-26 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$760 million with MaineDOT requesting \$456 million in MPDG funds. The remaining funds will be comprised of other federal, state, and private sector lease payments.

NRCM has been working on behalf of our 30,000 members and supporters for more than half a century to protect, conserve, and defend Maine's environment. Today, we cannot meaningfully do that work without addressing climate change, the single biggest threat to Maine's woods, waters, wildlife, coasts, and communities. Maine has adopted ambitious emissions reduction and clean energy statutes that require the state to decrease gross greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

Maine has also developed a comprehensive climate action plan, *Maine Won't Wait*, which establishes actions necessary to achieve these goals through a clean energy transition that creates good-paying jobs, reduces our reliance on polluting fossil fuels, and stabilizes energy prices. Developing the world-class offshore wind resource in the Gulf of Maine is an essential element of this vision, with offshore wind estimated to generate roughly half of the clean energy Maine needs to move away from fossil fuel power generation, and electrify home heating and transportation.

As highlighted in the *Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap*, building a port facility in Maine is a priority for unlocking Maine's opportunity in offshore wind, as well as supporting regional decarbonization goals and the Biden Administration's goal to deploy 15 Gigawatts (GW) of floating offshore wind by 2035. Based on the information available to us, the plan described in

Protecting the Nature of Maine

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the MaineDOT application represents that best path forward for achieving the full-scale deployment of floating offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine needed to achieve these goals.

A dedicated deep water floating offshore wind port in Maine would be ideally suited to serve the nascent floating offshore wind industry for the entire East Coast and enable localized manufacturing of advanced energy technology, including the floating offshore wind platform technology being developed by the University of Maine. Additionally, the barge component of the project will be the first-of-its-kind Jones Act compliant U.S. flagged semi-submersible barge capable of handling concrete floating offshore wind foundations.

Over the past several years, NRCM has worked in coalition with a broad and strong coalition of environmental and labor groups to promote the responsible development of floating offshore wind power in the Gulf of Maine. We collectively believe that development of this new industry must not repeat the mistakes of our current energy system. We must meet high standards for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts to wildlife, fisheries, and the environment, while also meeting high standards for labor, job quality, and the equitable distribution of economic and community benefits.

We fully support Maine's application for these federal funds which will be critical to advancing efforts on this project in the immediate future and unlocking additional investments in clean energy generation and long-term local economic development opportunities. With the construction of the port and barge, we are confident that Maine can be a leader in the responsible development of a floating offshore wind industry that will contribute to growing domestic expertise and supply chain capabilities with broader benefits to the nation as a whole.

In summary, we strongly support the effort to build an offshore wind port in Maine and respectfully request your support for this critical grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Shapiro', with a stylized, overlapping loop at the end.

Jack Shapiro
Climate & Clean Energy Program Director
Natural Resources Council of Maine