



# Findings from OSWPAG Member Interviews

June 8, 2022

The State of Maine's Offshore Wind Port Advisory Group (OSWPAG or Advisory Group) serves as a volunteer advisory body to the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), and other state officials regarding the development of a port to serve the offshore wind industry that will enable Maine to realize the benefits of the rapidly developing industry in balance with Maine's economy and environment.

Kay Rand and personnel from Gannett Fleming interviewed each Advisory Group member to gather information about 1) the member's organization and general knowledge and interest(s) in the Maine Offshore Wind (OSW) Initiative and port planning process to date; and 2) the member's meeting availability and preferences. The interview results were used to help develop the preliminary Advisory Group Meeting Program.

## Interview Methodology

A list of discussion topics and questions was prepared.

Kay Rand contacted members and scheduled interviews via Zoom. Interviews occurred between March 30 and May 11, 2022.

Gannett Fleming conducted research in advance of each interview to gather each member's title and biography, where available, and to become familiar with the represented organization's profile (i.e., website and activities related to OSW development in Maine). Questions were tailored to each member based on this research.

At the start of each interview, Kay introduced the member and the Gannett Fleming staff, described the purpose of the interview as a "get-to-know-you" conversation prior to convening the Advisory Group, and handed off the interview to Gannett Fleming.

Two Gannett Fleming staff participated in each interview; one to lead the interview and one to document the interviewee response. Interviews were not recorded. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, with most concluding at approximately 45 minutes.

## Summary Findings

Summary findings from the interviews are listed below, followed by supporting information for each finding. These findings are reported as the knowledge, opinions, and perceptions of members prior to the first OSWPAG meeting.

### **OSWPAG Members and Represented Organizations**

1. Most members have spent the majority of their lives in Maine.
2. Members have varied professional and service experience across the public, private and non-profit sectors of Maine's economy.



3. Members' organizations work to sustain and protect economic, environmental, and social interests in Maine. Several organizations work across overlapping areas of interest.

### **Maine's Ports and Port Communities**

4. Maine's ports have varied maritime functions based on their land and water characteristics.
5. The planning team should experience Maine's coastline and its communities to understand the potential benefits and impacts of an OSW port.

### **Members' Interest and Knowledge of OSW, and specifically an OSW Port**

6. Organizations have a common interest in an increased use of clean, renewable energy to combat climate change.
7. Members' knowledge about OSW technology, the emerging industry, and Maine's OSW Roadmap varies from detailed to familiar.
8. Members want to understand how the industry will locate wind farms; what public infrastructure the industry will use; and what improvements or additional infrastructure are needed.
9. Members want to see all ports fairly considered for potential use as an OSW port.
10. Members want to understand OSW port operations and potential impacts, both positive and negative, to communities, economies, and the environment.
11. Members understand that impacts of development can be complex.
12. Members perceive several potential positive economic and environmental impacts (benefits) from OSW and/or an OSW port in Maine.
13. Members perceive potential negative or adverse economic, environmental and social impacts from OSW and/or an OSW port in Maine.

### **Members' Expectations for the OSWPAG Process**

14. Members understand the need for the Advisory Group but do not fully understand its mission and expected outcomes.
15. Members expect the OSW port planning and development process to be thorough and transparent.
16. Members do expect to report on discussions at the OSWPAG meetings to their organizations.

### **Members' Meeting Availability and Preferences**

17. Two weeks' notice for a two-hour meeting and one month's notice for a full-day meeting was acceptable.
18. Regarding meeting time of day, weekday meetings were expected; mornings were preferred.
19. Members prefer an in-person format, especially for longer meetings.
20. Most members are familiar and/or experienced with Zoom.



## Detailed Findings

### OSWPAG Members and Represented Organizations

#### 1. Most members have spent a significant portion of their lives in Maine.

- Seven members are life-long Mainers.
- Six have lived in Maine 25 years or more.
- Two have lived in Maine less than five years.
- Two live outside Maine today and have 35+-year ties to Maine.

#### 2. Members have varied professional and service experience across the public, private and non-profit sectors of Maine’s economy.

##### *Public Policy*

- Federal Policy
- State Policy
- Local Government
- Local Planning
- Lobbying

##### *Public Sector*

- Education
- Recreation
- Justice
- Law Enforcement
- Military

##### *Private Industry*

- Commercial Fishing, Aquaculture
- Shipping
- Oil/Gas
- Engineering
- Construction
- Industry-to-Government Relations
- Communications and Marketing
- Finance

##### *Environmental Conservation & Advocacy*

- Land and Natural Resource Conservation and Management
- Environmental Advocacy

#### 3. Members’ organizations work to sustain and protect economic, environmental, and social interests in Maine. Several organizations work across overlapping areas of interest.

| Organization                                | Primary Organizational Interest(s) |                                   |                         |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|   | Economic                           | Environmental                     | Social                  |
| Association of General Contractors of Maine | Port Operator                      |                                   | Apprenticeship Programs |
| Conservation Law Foundation                 |                                    | Advocacy                          | Legal Expertise         |
| Friends of Sears Island                     |                                    | Land/Resource Stewardship         | Education               |
| Islesboro Islands Trust                     |                                    | Advocacy, Open Space Preservation | Education               |
| Maine Audubon                               |                                    | Advocacy                          | Education               |
| Maine Chamber of Commerce                   | Advocacy                           |                                   |                         |
| Maine Conservation Voters                   |                                    | Advocacy                          | Education               |
| Maine Labor Climate Council                 | Labor Advocacy                     |                                   | Apprenticeship Programs |
| Maine Port Authority                        | Port and Intermodal Infrastructure |                                   |                         |
| Maritime Industries                         | Fishermen                          | Water Quality                     |                         |



| Organization                                   | Primary Organizational Interest(s)  |               |                 |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
|  | Economic                            | Environmental | Social          |
| Pilots Association                             | Maritime Service Provider           |               |                 |
| Public At-Large (2)                            | ●                                   | ●             | ●               |
| Sprague  | Port Operator                       |               |                 |
| Sierra Club Maine                              |                                     | Advocacy      | Education       |
| Town of Searsport,<br>Town of Stockton Springs | Economic Development                |               | Quality of Life |
| University of Maine College of Engineering     | Technology Research and Development |               |                 |

## Maine’s Ports and Port Communities

### 4. Maine’s ports have varied maritime functions based on their land and water characteristics.

- Maine’s three-port strategy or policy, adopted in the mid-1970s, promotes investment in the state’s three deep-water ports—Portland, Searsport, and Eastport—to support industrial development.
- Each of the deep-water ports is a complex of land- and water-based facilities, owned and operated by public and private entities.
- The Arctic Circle will be opening to shipping. How is Maine positioning its ports for this change?

#### *Portland*

- Portland has very limited available space (land and water) for additional development.

#### *Eastport*

- Eastport is not served by rail.
- Development at Eastport may require consultation with Canada. Note: A proposed liquid propane gas terminal in Eastport was viewed negatively by Canada.

#### *Searsport*

- Searsport has a 100+ year history as a port, including a long history with energy (e.g., various fuels, land-based wind turbines), and general support from residents for business and industry to generate jobs and tax revenue; some development proposals have failed.
- Searsport supports the current wind energy industry having received approximately 90 percent of land-based wind components.
- Searsport is a protected port, has very deep waters (40 feet of dredged waters) with a direct line to the open ocean. This is a rare condition.
- Sears Island is a part of the port of Searsport.
- MaineDOT agreed to prioritize development at Mack Point before considering new development of Sears Island.
- Mack Point is primarily privately operated.
- A market transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy, and associated capacities at Mack Point, will occur over years, not months. Both must be accommodated for the transition period.



## *Sears Island*

- Various land uses have been proposed and passionately opposed on Sears Island (e.g., nuclear power plant, aluminum smelter, LNG Terminal).
- The State of Maine purchased Sears Island in the late 1990s.
- A conservation easement protects approximately 2/3 of the island from development. The remainder of the island is reserved for future transportation use.
- Resentment over the causeway's construction and impact lingers for some locals.
- Sears Island has been studied. Research was conducted between 1989 and 1990 in anticipation of a cargo port proposal.
- Sears Island is unique; it has characteristics of both the mainland and coastal islands.
- There has not been a study to definitively show the economic value of Sears Island in its current state.

## *Other Ports*

- Other ports have come into service since the three-port strategy was adopted—specifically, cruise ship ports at Bar Harbor, Rockland, Boothbay Harbor, and Bucksport as well as smaller ports serving the commercial fishing industry.
- Highway access to other ports for inland trucking is difficult.

## **5. The planning team should experience Maine's coastline and its communities to understand the potential benefits and impacts of an OSW port.**

### *Town of Searsport*

- The working class lives west of US Route 1. The retired class lives east of US Route 1. These are widely divergent socioeconomic strata.
- The town is working to expand wastewater service and discussing other service expansions east of town.

### *Places to See*

- Penobscot Marine Museum
- Sears Island
- Mack Point
- Moose Point State Park
- Searsport Shores (campground)
- MaineDOT ferries to sea islands (e.g., Islesboro, etc.)
- Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

### *Media Outlets along the Central Coast*

- The PenBay Pilot
- Village Soup; there are Knox County and Waldo County versions
- Republican Journal
- Ellsworth American
- Bangor Daily News
- Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce



## *Smaller Ports and Coastal Communities*

- Bucksport (an inland port community) lost jobs when the paper mill closed. It welcomed land-based aquaculture, whereas Belfast fought off an aquaculture project.
- There are various union halls in port communities. These may be available for public meetings.

## *Places to See*

- Bar Harbor for tourism, cruise ship
- Vinalhaven for its OSW experience
- Rockland
- Jonesport
- Stonington
- Ellsworth
- Castine/Maine Maritime Academy
- Camden to Schoodic Head (Winter Harbor)
- Bucksport

## *Waters Used by the Fishing Industry*

- The tow path to observe fishing intensity and trap density

## Members' Interest and Knowledge of OSW, and specifically an OSW Port

### **6. Organizations have a common interest in an increased use of clean, renewable energy to combat climate change.**

- Members agree that OSW is a key factor in reducing Maine's use of fossil fuels and transitioning to renewable energy sources to meet Maine's clean energy goals.
- Some members are familiar with detailed federal and state analyses of OSW energy potential to replace fossil fuel use.
- Some members see long-term benefits to wildlife, fisheries, and the fishing industry if the rate of climate change can be slowed or halted.
- Members identified these statewide opportunities for OSW in Maine:
  - Bringing the University of Maine's technology to market (i.e., floating OSW turbines) and contributing to the growth of renewable energy and OSW in the northeast United States and beyond.
  - Exporting OSW technology and manufactured products/components.
- Mitigating climate change will be expensive. The longer we wait, the more expensive the transition will be.

### **7. Members' knowledge about OSW technology, the emerging industry, and Maine's OSW Roadmap varies from detailed to familiar.**

- Generally, one or more ports in Maine are needed to support the launch of OSW floating turbines, as well as turbine operations and maintenance.
- Uplands, adjacent to deep waters, would be needed to support turbine component manufacturing.



- Some members have a detailed understanding of the economic potential of OSW. This consists of:
  - Maine’s citizens spend \$4-6 billion per year on fossil fuels; this money leaves the state.
  - Energy from fossil fuels will need to be replaced by clean energy sources.
  - OSW could generate 1,000s of jobs in the energy industry and related jobs from economic growth.
  - Other states are actively supporting and/or taking command of OSW. If Maine doesn’t participate, we risk losing control of the economics, the industry and our resources/impacts. Others are making or have committed to make investments in ports supporting fixed-foundation OSW turbines (e.g., Somerset (Brighton Point), New Bedford, and Salem, MA). Marketing of other terminals has followed.
  - Economic development interests can be short-lived if the state is not prepared to engage with all project owners and technologies. For example, Norwegian energy company Statoil canceled its offshore wind project in Maine in 2013 when the State allowed the University of Maine to bid for an OSW project in State waters.<sup>1</sup>
- Members generally expect the OSW industry to develop in Maine.
- A timeline to Maine’s goal to electrify heating and transportation by 2030 requires Maine to act quickly.
- Maine should support proven OSW technology or technologies and apply success and lessons learned from others’ experience(s).
  - DeepCwind Consortium piloted a grid connected OSW turbine in June 2013 (1:8 scale floating turbine prototype). What did Monhegan residents experience with the prototype?
  - New England Aqua Ventus (NEAV) is designing the full-scale floating turbine, with construction to start in March 2023.
- Maine’s Renewable Energy Market Assessment identified OSW as the State’s largest renewable energy opportunity. Other opportunities consist of onshore wind, solar, hydroelectric, biomass, and waste-to-energy.
- Several members are aware of Maine’s OSW Roadmap through prior briefings on the 2021 feasibility study prepared by Moffat and Nichol. Of those who are familiar with the feasibility study:
  - Some accept Searsport as a potential port site generally, without specifying Mack Point or Sears Island.
  - Some accept Searsport and specifically Mack Point.
  - Some are uncertain about new port development on Sears Island.
  - Some are opposed to new port development on Sears Island.

**8. Members want to understand how the industry will locate wind farms; what public infrastructure the industry will use; and what improvements or additional infrastructure are needed.**

- All sectors need to find mutually agreeable solutions:

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<sup>1</sup> Sonal Patel, “Statoil Pulls Floating Offshore Wind Project in Maine”, Oct. 24, 2013. Accessed on-line June 7, 2022: [www.powermag.com/statoil-pulls-floating-offshore-wind-project-in-maine/](http://www.powermag.com/statoil-pulls-floating-offshore-wind-project-in-maine/)



- How much OSW capacity is needed?
- How much OSW energy can be generated?
- Where wind farms should be located.
- What port or ports will serve the industry?
- The Gulf of Maine Research Array of 12 or fewer floating turbines, to be located 21 miles south of Monhegan Island, may help to answer some of these questions.

## **9. Members want to see all ports fairly considered for OSW port selection.**

- The to-be-named OSW port in Maine will serve future commercial-scale OSW development.
- Multiple terminals may be needed across various ports to meet demand.
- Port selection should compare the available capacity at each port complex for any and all wind port functions.
- Port selection needs to consider operational criteria such as channel traffic and the availability of pilots in the area, in addition to land availability, water depths, and other factors.

## **10. Members want to understand OSW operations and impacts to communities, economies, and the environment.**

- OSW and onshore wind are different technologies and should not be compared.
- The public has a narrow understanding of OSW and tends to overlook the land-side part of OSW.
- Impacts to related infrastructure (e.g., roads, rail, transmission). How does OSW tie into the grid (e.g., transfer station in Searsport)?
- Pilots can help to maximize the safety and operability of port design and should be consulted during design.
- The tow route and timing/frequency of the tow will be important to the fishing community and recreational use of the waters.
- The lobster and fishing industries have been opposed to OSW. They expect the OSW industry will restrict access to fishing grounds/waters and potentially damage or destroy their equipment, impacting profitability.
- The lobster and fishing industries have been impacted by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regulations intended to protect the right whale. Litigation against public agencies is ongoing.
- How will construction trades with local jurisdictions (e.g., solar site prep work, electrician, etc.) be negotiated relative to OSW port development and future potential manufacture, operations, and maintenance of floating turbines?

## **11. Members understand that impacts of development can be complex.**

- Members recognize that there are various types and timelines for impacts, both positive and negative. These range from direct, near-term, one-time/one-place impacts to dispersed, cumulative, and long-term impacts.





## 12. Members perceive several potential positive economic and environmental impacts (benefits) from OSW and/or an OSW port in Maine.

### *Economic Benefits*

- Additional construction and manufacturing jobs.
- Equitable distribution of economic benefits across port communities.
- Diversification/Development, training, and education of local workforce.
  - Some tools: project labor agreement, prevailing wage, community benefit agreements, local hire provisions.
- Additional (complementary) commercial/industrial development.
- Increased tourism, specifically industrial tourism.

### *Environmental Benefits*

- Reuse of land to support energy industry transition and associated conservation of open space.
- Strides to combat climate change and develop clean, renewable energy.

### *Social/Cultural Benefits*

- Recognition of universities and educational institutions as innovation hubs (e.g., University of Maine Orono, Maine Maritime Academy).

## 13. Members perceive potential negative or adverse economic, environmental and social impacts from OSW and/or an OSW port in Maine.

### *Economic Impacts*

- Disruption to existing commercial activity, including shipping, fishing, tourism/recreation, and the supporting workforce.
  - As a small port, Searsport is sensitive to change (~110 ships/year); losing 2-3 customers at Searsport could radically change service (i.e., no longer a 24/7 port).
- Increased channel traffic competing with near-shore commercial fishing activity in the channel, loss of fishing gear.
  - Additional traffic would be aggravation in Portland; additional traffic would have minimal impact on Searsport and Eastport.
- Increased competition and higher pricing in the local housing market if workers relocate to the OSW port community(ies).
- Increased highway traffic volumes, increased maintenance, and need for transportation improvements.
- Heavy truck traffic and potential impacts to buildings
- Impacts to fishing industry and supply chain workforce, e.g., machinists.

### *Environmental Impacts*

- Loss of/degradation to natural resources and systems:
  - Aquatic environment (e.g., fisheries, aquatic species, aquatic habitat (e.g., eelgrass), water quality, potential release of mercury, etc.).
  - Terrestrial habitat (e.g., loss of wooded open space and associated carbon sequestration capacity).



- Aerial environment (e.g., structural and/or operational obstructions to bird and bat migratory routes, air quality).
- Operational impacts associated with the long-term assembly, launch and maintenance of floating turbines (i.e., emissions (type, concentration), noise (frequency, volume), light (intensity, variability)).

### *Social/Cultural Impacts*

- Impacts to the federally recognized Penobscot Tribe
- Loss of access or diminishment of quality to low-impact recreational use on Sears Island.
- Change in visual quality of the shoreline (e.g., presence and height of structures and equipment).

## Members' Expectations for the OSWPAG Process

### **14. Members understand the need for the Advisory Group but do not fully understand its mission and expected outcomes.**

Members remarks consisted of:

- Civil discussion of any and all aspects of wind port site selection.
- A clear statement of the Advisory Group's product or outcome.
- A definition of consensus or other forms of agreement, if applicable.
- Well-programmed meetings with clear objectives.
- Fewer, longer meetings to achieve meeting objectives.
- Required field trips, if applicable.
- A role as decision-maker.
- Determination of the following:
  - The role of one or more ports in supporting the OSW industry in Maine.
  - With which organizations the State of Maine can build a coalition in support of OSW development.
  - How to approach and work with opposing organizations.

### **15. Members expect the OSW port planning and development process to be thorough and transparent.**

Members remarks consisted of:

- An equitable site selection process among Portland, Searsport, and Eastport.
- A thorough and transparent analysis that:
  - Characterizes how Maine compares to other states and Canada in OSW potential and readiness.
  - Considers all ports in Maine.
  - Identifies the minimum land requirements for port (and other facility) activity, including the lay down area required for turbine assembly.
  - Defines the reasonable proximity of an OSW port to a floating turbine's anchored site.
  - Is based on evidence, not feeling.
  - Considers the needs for and of the workforce and workforce training facilities.



- Addresses environmental impacts with quality mitigation strategies (e.g., if (X) is impacted here, where can (high quality X at an ecosystem scale) be preserved elsewhere?).
- A coalition of organizations working toward OSW.

**16. Members do expect to report on OSWPAG meetings to their organizations.**

- Reports will be primarily to organizational leadership.
- A one-page list of meeting highlights would be helpful.
- Access to presentations would be helpful.

## Members' Meeting Availability and Preferences

*Preliminary meeting assumptions:*

- 1) In-person meeting location: Augusta or Searsport
- 2) Meeting duration: 2 hours, 4 hours, or full-day meetings.

- None of these assumptions were noted as barriers to member participation.

**17. Two weeks' notice for a two-hour meeting and one month's notice for a full-day meeting was acceptable.**

**18. Regarding meeting time of day, weekday meetings were expected; mornings were preferred.**

- Weekday evenings between 5pm and 9pm were not preferred.
- Saturdays between 9am and 5pm were also not preferred.

**19. Members prefer an in-person format, especially for longer meetings.**

- Members appreciate a virtual meeting format (with a call-in option) for the time and travel savings, as well as personal convenience.

**20. Most members are familiar and/or experienced with Zoom.**

- They are open to other commonly used platforms, as well.

## Materials Referenced During Member Interviews

Energy and Environmental Economics and Applied Economics Clinic, *State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment*, March 2021. Accessed on-line June 7, 2022, [www.maine.gov/energy/studies-reports-working-groups/current-studies-working-groups/renewable-energy-market-assessment](http://www.maine.gov/energy/studies-reports-working-groups/current-studies-working-groups/renewable-energy-market-assessment).

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