

July 29, 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 to express The Nature Conservancy in Maine's 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 Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive. TNC has been leading conservation efforts in Maine for more than 60 years and has been directly involved in conserving habitats and restoring waterways across Maine, North America, and beyond. TNC is committed to helping meet Maine's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target – a goal that relies on a rapid transition to a renewable energy economy, of which offshore wind plays a key role.

As the United States works to build the offshore wind sector, it is essential to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to communities and the environment in project design, construction, and operation. Funding from the MPDG Program would assist Maine DOT with completing the project design, conducting a robust environmental impact assessment, and beginning construction.

This grant would help Maine take the next steps in developing floating offshore wind by creating a purpose-built floating offshore wind port; supporting new, good-paying jobs in the region; spurring broader economic development; and unlocking the potential of the Gulf of Maine wind resource to reduce reliance on fossil fuels consistent with the state's climate action plan, *Maine Won't Wait*, and the Biden Administration's goal to deploy 15 Gigawatts of floating offshore wind by 2035. A floating offshore wind port would serve the nascent industry and enable localized manufacturing of advanced energy technology.

TNC Maine supports the state's application for these federal funds, which will be critical to an informed public engagement process and to unlocking additional investments in clean energy generation and long-term local economic development opportunities. Our support is based on our

expectation that the State of Maine will continue to use a thorough, inclusive, and collaborative public process to evaluate the costs and benefits of developing a first-of-its-kind floating offshore wind port and to identify and implement appropriate mitigation measures.

We respectfully request your strong consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Dempsey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kate Dempsey
State Director
The Nature Conservancy in Maine