



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

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October 29, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

On behalf of the people of Maine, I extend my deep appreciation for your steadfast commitment to address climate change. Maine knows all too well the harms that extreme weather, warming land and ocean temperatures, rising sea levels, and chronic droughts are having on our communities, our people, and our natural environment.

Like the Biden Administration, my Administration has committed to combating climate change. We have enacted some of the nation's most ambitious state goals to reduce carbon emissions and to transition to clean energy, and we are working to ensure our communities are more resilient, reducing energy costs through energy efficiency and electrification, and generating lasting economic growth and good-paying jobs.

Central to our climate strategy is expanding sources of renewable energy to reduce Maine's crippling dependence on heating oil and limit the exposure of our residents to volatile global energy markets. Maine spends more than \$4 billion each year to import fossil fuels, which is money best kept at home to grow local energy and create local jobs.

The considerable, yet untapped, offshore energy potential in the Gulf of Maine is one of our state's prime opportunities to accelerate our transition away from fossil fuels, to grow a vibrant new industry, and to create good-paying jobs in high-tech fields and skilled trades that sustain our communities for years to come.

My Administration has committed to pursuing offshore wind energy in a way that works best— a thoughtful, deliberate and responsible approach that leads with listening to those for whom offshore wind may not be viewed as opportunity but as a threat to their way of life.

Here in Maine, that means listening to many in our important fishing industry, which is synonymous with our state's history, heritage, and culture, and which is one of our leading economic sectors. Our state's 8,800 licensed fishermen create more than \$1.5 billion direct



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economic benefit to Maine, and our fishing fleet makes up nearly a third of all vessel trips on the East Coast states and more than twice as many as the next highest state.

Their concerns about offshore wind matter to Maine, and they matter to me, especially against the backdrop of other federal actions in the Gulf of Maine that, in my view, have emerged without adequate consideration or appreciation of their effect on those who rely on the ocean for their lives and livelihood.

I believe offshore wind and fishing can co-exist in the Gulf of Maine. But that belief has not stopped my Administration from listening to concerns regarding offshore wind and ensuring our overall efforts are inclusive, transparent and supported by science.

This is why, earlier this month, my energy office submitted an application to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to lease approximately 15 square miles of the Gulf of Maine, some 30 miles off our coast, to research how deep-water offshore wind may interact with the marine environment and fishing.

The goal of this project is to answer critical questions around co-existence in the Gulf, find ways to minimize effects on natural resources, and advance the innovative floating wind technology developed by the University of Maine that has been supported by federal research grants for a decade.

This application follows nearly a year of dialogue, detailed analysis of scientific and fisheries data, and a thorough public process to ensure we gave BOEM detailed information that underscores the importance of this project and why research is the next reasonable step for offshore wind for Maine.

Our listening and learning will not stop with the BOEM application. This summer, we convened over 100 leaders from Maine's fisheries, environmental, energy, marine industries, unions, and we continue to work over the next year to develop a strategic plan for the offshore wind industry in Maine.

By listening and learning to those on the front lines of offshore wind, especially those who desire solutions but also rightfully fear unknown effects, Maine is taking the thoughtful, necessary and right approach that will deliver benefits to our people, our communities, our economy, and our planet.

Recently, the Department of the Interior [announced](#) its intention to hold up to seven commercial offshore wind lease auctions, including in the Gulf of Maine, over the next four years to support the Administration's goal of generating 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030.

While I am supportive of responsibly advancing offshore wind, I ask you, and the staff of BOEM, to look closely at the work we are doing in Maine, and consider it a model for a thoughtful, deliberate, and productive approach to moving forward.



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I also request BOEM reconvene its Gulf of Maine task force on offshore wind, which includes Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, to provide additional information about how stakeholders and the fishing industry can have meaningful involvement in the process. Of particular interest in Maine, of course, is the lack of spatial data for the lobster fishery, which will require significant outreach and unique consideration.

With the Administration's announcement, the timing is right to hold further discussions to ensure a level playing field among states, and to explore joint investment and mitigation opportunities stemming from commercial leasing in the Gulf. Maine fishermen must be involved in the Federal dialogue, just as they are involved here at the state level.

Thank you again for your leadership in this challenging time, when advancing a sustainable future for all people is an utmost imperative. I appreciate the existing engagement of BOEM and look forward to continued collaboration.

I stand ready and willing, as does the state of Maine, to support your efforts to fight climate change, grow renewable energy, and build a more vibrant and resilient economy for our state and our nation.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills
Governor



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