



November 16, 2023

The Honorable Elizabeth Klein
Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Klein:

We write regarding the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Draft Wind Energy Area (WEA) for commercial leasing for wind power development in the Gulf of Maine. We appreciate that BOEM has listened to our requests, and those of Maine's fishing community, and removed Lobster Management Area (LMA) 1 from the Draft. We are concerned, however, that the agency has identified two Secondary Areas within LMA 1 for further input and possible inclusion in the final WEA.

LMA 1 is a critical fishing ground to Maine's lobster fleet and is integral to Maine's fishing heritage as the source of all lobster landed in our state. The area accounts for more than 80 percent of all lobster landed in the United States, one of the highest value species in the nation. It also encompasses the majority of Maine's nearshore federal fishing activity for other species. Siting offshore wind development outside of LMA 1 minimizes conflict not only with this industry, but also with the majority of recreational fishermen and other marine users.

Given these past communications with BOEM, we are concerned that the Draft WEA identifies Secondary Areas A and B—encompassing more than 200,000 acres in LMA 1—as areas for offshore wind that BOEM may incorporate in a final WEA following additional input on their suitability and potential conditions for inclusion. Given the importance of these fishing grounds to Maine's fishing industry, the significant feedback that your agency has already received, and the recently passed Maine law that disincentivizes development in LMA 1, it is clear these areas are inappropriate for inclusion in the final Wind Energy Area.

Furthermore, continued discussion of areas within LMA1 distracts from our collective efforts to ensure that the final WEA adequately considers the impacts to the offshore fleet who utilize fishing grounds within the draft WEA. As BOEM moves forward with the identification of the Final WEAs, we strongly encourage you to work closely with Maine's fishing industry to understand existing uses and minimize impacts to the heavily regulated offshore groundfish fleet. We want to ensure that any areas leased in the Gulf of Maine avoid and at the very least minimize impacts to the fishing industry whenever possible.

In order for BOEM to meet its stated goal of avoiding impacts on fishing communities, the agency should exclude Secondary Areas within LMA1 in the final WEA. We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

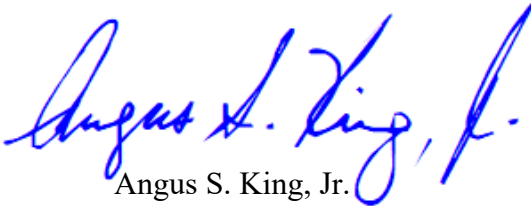
Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Janet T. Mills
Governor