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## **Future of Offshore Wind in Governor's Hands with Ports Legislation** *Maine Legislature Passes Groundbreaking Bill to Bring Benefits to the State*

**AUGUSTA** – Legislation intended to spark the creation of a new offshore wind industry in Maine is on its way to Gov. Janet Mills, who has been non-committal about her position.

The bill, [LD 1847](#), An Act to Modify the Visual Impact Standards for Offshore Wind Port Development and Establish Labor Standards for Wind Power Projects, is an amended version of Legislation proposed by the governor, and includes requirements that any port facilities in Maine that are built to support offshore wind energy include strong labor, community benefit and environmental standards.

“A broad coalition of working people and environmental advocates have come together to support the creation of a new industry in Maine that can help us combat climate change, create good jobs and support coastal communities,” said Francis Eanes of the Maine Labor Climate Council. “Together with [other legislation](#), this legislation ensures that Maine people benefit from the development of offshore wind. If we want offshore wind to happen, we need a port. We are grateful for the strong support we’ve seen in the Legislature, and we are hopeful that Gov. Mills will support this groundbreaking step forward on one of her most high-profile priorities.”

The legislation has [three major components](#): It requires offshore wind developers using state port facilities to create high quality jobs and maximize federal port funding opportunities by adopting strong labor standards; requires developers to invest in local workforce development and prioritize the hiring of Maine workers, especially those from impoverished rural communities; and prioritizes worker safety and the environment by requiring port facilities to seek federal funding for zero-emission equipment, which reduces noise and pollution for workers and nearby communities.

The bill does not address where port facilities should be located, an issue that's being considered by the Maine Department of Transportation and other important local stakeholders.

The legislation also puts **Maine in a strong position to attract federal funding** for port construction.

The last two years of federal legislation and policy have created an unprecedented landscape of opportunity for offshore wind port development. Between the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, and most recently the Floating Offshore Wind EarthShot Initiative, significant resources are newly available to catalyze the buildout of a purpose-built offshore wind hub in Maine capable of supporting the commercialization of floating offshore wind.

Strong labor standards run throughout these federal opportunities: following from **Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad**, it is the policy of the Biden Administration to organize a whole-of-government approach to combat the climate crisis by spurring the creation of “well-paying union jobs and economic growth.” Interagency **funding implementation guidance** from the Department of Labor, and port funding opportunities released so far, prioritize funding applications that commit to **high-road labor standards**— including Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), Labor Peace Agreements (LPAs), and **Community Benefit Agreements** (CBAs) — which have a proven record for guaranteeing fair wages, meaningful workforce development opportunities, equitable job access opportunities for workers underrepresented in the construction and manufacturing sectors, and offer workers a free and fair chance to join a union.

“This legislation is the fiscally responsible way to build a new port for the offshore wind industry that has an opportunity to track significant federal funding support,” Eanes said.

Despite Gov. Mills’ support for offshore wind, her election as the co-chair of the bipartisan **U.S. Climate Alliance**, her speech to the United Nations calling on everyone to do “what it takes to combat climate change,” and the inclusion of components – including strong labor and environmental standards – from **Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap**, a spokesperson for the governor was **noncommittal on the legislation**.

“For Maine to meet its goals to be carbon neutral, the state must develop significant new sources of clean energy. This bill will ensure that the shift to renewable, sustainable energy also creates good-paying jobs, helps to grow the middle-class and ensures host communities benefit from a new industry,” Eanes said.

Maine voters overwhelmingly support building offshore wind energy in the state with strong labor standards, according to a new poll released by Impact Research.

The poll found that Maine voters believe offshore wind energy will improve the economy and support requiring developers to provide living wages and workplace safety protections for the jobs offshore wind will create.

Poll findings include:

**By a 40-point margin, nearly two-thirds of Maine voters support building offshore wind energy with strong labor standards** (63% support / 23% oppose / 14% don't know). This includes solid net support across all demographic subgroups, including non-college voters (+42) and even across party lines: Democrats (+78), Independents (+28), and Republicans (+11). Overall support in Maine is in line with the 66% of voters who support it across the nine states we surveyed.



**Maine voters see workplace safety and living wages as paramount for any jobs created by the offshore wind industry in the state.** Maine voters overwhelmingly view workplace safety protections (92%) and living wages and good benefits (84%) as very important requirements for jobs created by the offshore wind industry.

**Maine voters believe offshore wind will be good for the economy and jobs— two of their top priorities for lawmakers.** By a 16-point margin, they believe building offshore wind energy will be good for the economy (37% good / 21% bad); and by 32 points, they believe it will create jobs (43% create jobs / 11% cost jobs).

**Supporting offshore wind with strong labor standards is politically beneficial.** By a 27-point margin, voters say they are more likely to vote for candidates who support it (43% more / 16% less), including Independents by a 20-point margin (33% more / 13% less).

About the poll: Impact Research conducted an online and text-to-web survey conducted April 14th to 20th, 2023 among N=3300 registered voters in target offshore wind development states, including N=200 interviews in Maine. The margin of error for the overall results is  $\pm 1.7\%$  and  $\pm 6.9\%$  for results in Maine at the 95% level of confidence.

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