

PENOBSCOT BAY & RIVER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

18 Mortland Road
Searsport, ME 04974

Phone (207) 548-1077
FAX (207) 548-1078
E-mail: pilots@penbaypilots.com

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

May 2, 2024

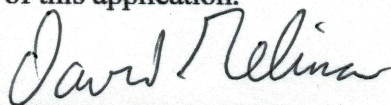
I am writing to express our association's strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) *Dirigo Atlantic Floating Offshore Wind Port Project* application to the FY25-26 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program.

The State of Maine is uniquely positioned and qualified to support this nascent industry. The University of Maine at Orono has been the leading research institution in the nation in the development of cost-effective floating offshore wind platforms using concrete instead of more costly steel. Maine has a robust composite boatbuilding industry known throughout the world for the quality of its work; this expertise is directly applicable to composite blade construction. And Maine is home to Maine Maritime Academy, the nation's premier nautical institution for placement of qualified graduates in the fields of marine engineering, power generation, navigation, and vessel management.

Most importantly, the Maine Department of Transportation owns 900-acre Sears Island, a greenfield site that is adjacent to the federal navigation channel which services the Port of Searsport. Through the foresight of an agreement crafted between the State and the Environmental Community fifteen years ago, six hundred acres of this land was placed under permanent conservation protection, with the remaining three hundred and thirty acres left available for future port development. Significantly, this port-development area has over forty-feet of water depth immediately adjacent to its shores. Utilizing this designated parcel to locate the *Dirigo Atlantic Floating Offshore Wind Port* will provide the most cost-effective solution for this monumental undertaking, while at the same time offering the least environmental impacts to the marine environment due to the lack of need for dredging. This latter point cannot be emphasized strongly enough, as Penobscot Bay is home to the most valuable lobster fishery in the United States, and past dredging proposals have been vociferously fought by the lobstering and conservation communities.

In summary, our members are in full support of this project and respectfully request your strong consideration of this application.

Respectfully,


Captain David Gelinas