



Testimony of Behalf of the University of Maine

Presented by Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President of the University of Maine

**in Support of LD 336 *An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry*—
May 11, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology: My name is Joan Ferrini-Mundy and I am President of the University of Maine and its regional campus, the University of Maine at Machias. I am also University of Maine System Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. I am here in strong support for research, development and commercialization (RD&C) that directly support economic growth and Maine's future, like those proposed by LD 336, "*An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry*".

As Maine's public research university, the University of Maine has long proactively engaged in the research and development activities that directly apply to Maine's economy, our communities, our students, and all Mainers. Our historic efforts in developing solutions for Maine's energy, economic, and environmental challenges are how we enact our land grant, sea grant and space grant mission. And we are grateful to the Legislature whose investment in the Maine Economic Improvement Fund has enabled that work.

A decade-plus of RD&C activity led by the University of Maine Advanced Structures and Composites Center and Habib Dagher, has now placed Maine and UMaine at the front of the development of floating offshore wind technology. Our pioneering science and technology solutions build on many decades of R&D in the Gulf of Maine and Maine's coastal communities. This multidisciplinary work is undertaken by the Maine Sea Grant programs, our ocean observation and buoy network, and the University of Maine Lobster Institute. Scientists in our School of Marine Sciences study fisheries, stock assessment and circulation models; and faculty and students from across UMaine are studying the impacts of climate upon all matters of marine life, as well as social and economic impacts upon the resiliency of our coastal communities.

UMaine has shown the potential that RD&C holds for Maine's future. We are charting the way in the resurgence of Maine's heritage farming, fishing and forestry industries while fostering the formation of promising new ones—like additive manufacturing and clean energy from wind and biofuels. University RD&C is where talent development and innovation come together, because, at the center of all of these activities with public/private collaborations, of course, are our terrific students. These hands-on, real-world research learning experiences keep students highly engaged so that they are more likely to graduate and enter pathways to careers in Maine for which their knowledge, problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills will benefit our state in countless ways.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.