

SAFE Testimony on H.3161 and S.2169 – OSW Bills

Friday, July 23, 2023

Thank you Chair Barrett, Vice Chair Pacheco and members of the Committee. I would also like to thank the lead sponsor of the two bills I will speak on today, Senator Pacheco for Senate bill 2169 and Rep. Fernandes for House Bill 3161.

My name is Jim Mulloy – I am Co-Chair of Salem Alliance for the Environment, SAFE. SAFE is also a member of the MA and New England OSW coalitions.

SAFE was formed over 20 years ago to advocate for a better future for Salem. We helped the city transition from a coal-fired power plant to a gas-powered plant. We now want to help Salem become a key player in the transition to a renewable energy future. As you know, Salem's port is being developed as a marshaling station for Offshore Wind farms. Building more wind farms will ensure the Salem port stays active and that good-paying family-supporting jobs are available at the port.

SAFE supports both House bill 3161 and Senate bill 2169.

Senate bill 2169 increases Massachusetts's OSW goal to 12 GW by June 30 2030 and 15 GW by June 30 2035. These are ambitious goals but we believe they are needed given the crisis we find ourselves in. House bill 3161 sets somewhat less ambitious goals for OSW but it does remove the ceiling on procurements beyond June 30 2035. SAFE favors the removal of a ceiling on future procurements of OSW.

As already mentioned, Massachusetts alone will need 23 GW of OSW to reach our goal of net zero by 2050. SAFE believes now is the time to invest in OSW and that sending a signal to developers is important. The era of fossil fuels is over and the future of energy is renewable. SAFE believes these bills need to be enacted in advance of the 2024 lease auction to send a signal to both developers and BOEM.

These bills are needed to maintain Massachusetts' leadership on OSW while setting critical guardrails to ensure its responsible development. SAFE is particularly enthusiastic about the environmental justice components of House bill 3161. We believe those communities that have suffered the most during the fossil fuel era should be first in line to reap the benefits of this new technology. Salem has a large EJ community. These residents are looking for good-paying family-supporting jobs. SAFE is also supportive of the sections in House bill 3161 that focuses on enhancing the Mass Clean Energy Center. MassCEC will need more support if it is to play the role proposed by the Commonwealth.

In summary, both bills set ambitious targets that would put us on the path to achieving our climate goals while positioning the Commonwealth at the forefront of OSW development in the U.S. SAFE supports a just transition and believes a coordinated effort must be made to ensure those workers who will suffer during this transition are not ignored.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for your consideration.