

Sears Island Threatened by Development



Photo by Kevin Shields

We have a choice: Maine Department of Transportation is considering developing Sears Island, one of the largest undeveloped islands on the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S., into the hub for building and launching floating offshore wind turbines. This would destroy the island's ecological, recreational, and economic value, when re-developing Mack Point, an industrial site for more than a century, is a feasible option in Penobscot Bay.

What we know:

- Sears Island is a 941-acre island located off the coast of Searsport, Maine, with a rich legacy of thousands of years of stewardship by the region's Indigenous peoples.
- The State of Maine owns Sears Island. In 2007, 601 acres were placed under a conservation easement, held by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. 330 acres were reserved on the *Transportation Parcel* for possible future use as a cargo/container port.
- Friends of Sears Island, a volunteer nonprofit organization, manages the Conservation Area on behalf of the people of Maine.
- Sears Island is a special place. Because it's accessible by a causeway, visitors from around the country and the world may experience an iconic Maine island and everything it has to offer without needing a boat. Beaches and a network of maintained hiking trails are very popular.
- The State is proposing to build a manufacturing, assembly, and launching facility for floating offshore wind turbines on 80 acres of the Transportation Parcel. These will be deployed in the Gulf of Maine.
- If the wind port is built on Sears Island, more than 45 acres of upland will be cleared, graded, and compacted; 1,215,000 cubic yards of earth will be removed; and more than 17 acres of marine habitat will be filled with over 800,000 cubic yards of the harvested soil. This will destroy acres of eelgrass meadows, essential fish habitat, a fisheries nursery area, and shellfish beds. About one-third of the island will be changed forever.
- To assemble the wind turbines, a crane that can reach nearly 800 feet tall will be permanently installed on the western shore of the island, towering over any recreational activity or educational programs currently taking place on the other side.

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- The facility will be lighted all night and a security fence will surround the whole operation—so visitors will no longer be able to walk around the island. Noise and traffic will dramatically increase, and the experience of being on the island will be irreparably diminished.
- Sears Island is known as a top birding hotspot in Maine. Industrial development, with the accompanying noise and constant lighting on the western shore, would disturb birds' feeding habits and interrupt their migration routes; they would most likely bypass Sears Island altogether.
- We agree with the urgent need to develop new sources of renewable energy, but not by sacrificing an ecological and recreational treasure on the Maine coast like Sears Island.



What YOU Can Do:

Write Letters to the Editor (250 words maximum):

- Bangor Daily News: letters@bangordailynews.com
- Portland Press Herald: letterstotheeditor@pressherald.com
- Republican Journal: editor@villagesoup.com
- Free Press: copyedit@freepressonline.com
- Ellsworth American: news@ellsworthamerican.com

**Sign the
Petition!**

Here today, or at
[Change.org/ProtectSearsIsland](https://change.org/ProtectSearsIsland)

Contact Maine State Government Officials:

- Email to Offshore Wind Project Leadership: offshorewind@maine.gov
- Comment to MaineDOT: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/contact/>
- Comment to Governor Mills: <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/contact/share-your-opinion>
- Contact Your Legislators: <https://legislature.maine.gov/house/house/MemberProfiles/ListCountyDelegations>