



*October 1, 2014*

**Statement on Behalf of the National Audubon Society**

On behalf of the National Audubon Society and our millions of members and supporters, I'd like to take this opportunity to clarify our current policy position on the University of Maine Offshore Wind project known locally as Maine Aqua Ventus, here in the town of Bristol, Maine. Audubon believes that climate change is the greatest threat to birds, other wildlife, and the habitat that supports them. To that end, we support renewable energy, including wind power.

Although Audubon supports wind energy, we strongly believe proper siting and permitting are the keys to making it a successful and productive form of energy production. We have many concerns about the Maine Aqua Ventus proposed project, but at this time we do not oppose the pilot nature of the project.

We would like more research and investigation as to the exact siting, size and scale of the operation, and the technology used. Currently, we know very little about how wildlife species use Maine's coastal and offshore waters; for example, we do not know the location of foraging sites for most seabird species, including endangered Roseate Terns, bird and bat migration routes, behavioral responses to turbine activities, and the indirect and direct risks posed by offshore wind power development. Even if passing migrants avoid collisions with turbines, as has been observed at some wind sites in Europe, indirect impacts through avoidance behaviors and habitat alterations may cause cumulative damage to sensitive species. It is essential we have a greater understanding of how wildlife uses the area around the test site before any turbines are allowed to be erected.

We would like to work closely with the University of Maine to best address our questions and concerns regarding the Maine Aqua Ventus project. That knowledge will help us fully form our position on the project. We would like continued involvement in the planning and development of this project and reserve the right to oppose it if we come to the scientific conclusion that the benefits of this renewable energy project are outweighed by its detrimental effect to birds and wildlife. Currently, although we have serious concerns about the scale and location of the project, the National Audubon Society does not oppose the pilot study concept of the University of Maine's Offshore Wind project in the vicinity of Monhegan Island.

Stephen Kress

VP for Bird Conservation

National Audubon Society