

March 2024

Christine Guhl-Sadovy, President  
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities  
44 S. Clinton Ave  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Fourth Solicitation for Offshore Wind Comment Period

To President Guhl-Sadovy and Board Members,

The Board of Public Utilities, in its fourth offshore wind solicitation, needs to properly weigh the risks and rewards of these projects before approving any offshore wind turbine construction. And the Board has so far failed us.

At the heart of the Governor's plan, to expand New Jersey's clean energy portfolio, is the reduction of total global carbon emissions. But the simple fact is, as a legislator who sits on the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee, I have not been presented with any report on the total lifespan carbon output from these proposed projects.

What is the total carbon output for the manufacture, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of materials of these wind turbines? Will the power it produces offset the carbon cost of other energy generation methods we currently or could use? Most specifically nuclear power. How is it possible to give a fair analysis of the true risks and rewards of these projects without this critical information?

As of March 25th, a \$3.7 million group of research projects was announced to study the impact of these turbines on life in or around the ocean. But this research fails to address the most pressing concerns of our fishing industry. The projects include a whale study, a study of seasonal water-mixing dynamics, bird and bat tracking, and a sea turtle behavior and health study. Many of these projects are just duplications. Sadly, this is just another giveaway to favored organizations that have preferred policy outcomes. It does not pursue a study on the impact to scallopers whose grounds are within the offshore wind industrial zone. Thankfully we do have a recent study on ocean clamming, but its results were troubling.

According to Rutgers University, Atlantic surf clammers are expected to lose anywhere between 3 percent to 15 percent in revenue each year. And the news was even worse for vessels working out of Atlantic City. It could be as high as 25 percent loss in revenue. Losses that high could push those companies into uncompetitive territory. Thereby wiping out a valuable industry in an area in need of economic diversification. Nothing but higher prices and potential job loss are on the horizon for this critical shore industry under these proposed plans.

And the pain doesn't stop for our shore communities. When Orsted researched the impact their planned industrial wind turbines had on tourism, they found that 15 percent of tourists would stop visiting. And what does that translate to, over \$1.1 billion in tourism losses. And that wasn't for the whole Jersey Shore. That was just Cape May County! I expect that it would cost New Jersey billions of dollars in lost tourism revenue. And once those tourists start going to other States where they can have an unimpeded view of our beautiful ocean, we aren't likely to get them back.

The Board and the Governor are on a crusade that does not follow science. A foolhardy crusade that leaves us guessing on the total carbon footprint of these wind turbines, that greatly damages our clamming industry, and that crushes tourism for our business owners and municipalities. I just do not see how the rewards of these projects can offset these losses.

I invite you all to work together with my office to find actual solutions to the complex needs of New Jerseyans. We need to find the right balance of environmental conservation; safe, clean, and affordable energy; and economic impact. And I firmly believe that this round of solicitation, if it follows the pattern of the previous solicitations, will not strike that proper balance. Worse, it will probably hamper nearly every other legitimate objective in the name of the Governor's "Aggressive Clean Energy Goals".

An old adage comes to mind, "measure twice, cut once." Let's not move this process forward till we have properly measured the impact of these proposals.

Sincerely,

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