



March 26, 2024

To: The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
44 So. Clinton Ave., 7th Floor
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: The Nature Conservancy of New Jersey's comments of support for Docket No. QO24020109

The Nature Conservancy of New Jersey (TNC-NJ) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' draft guidance document for New Jersey's fourth offshore wind solicitation.

The Nature Conservancy's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work in 79 countries and all 50 states in the U.S., to address the twin crises facing our planet: biodiversity loss and climate change. The Conservancy has protected more than 120 million acres of land, 5,000 river miles and currently manages more than 150 marine conservation projects, around the world. The Nature Conservancy has been working to conserve, protect, and restore coastal and marine habitats and species for decades.

The Nature Conservancy has been active in New Jersey for over 60 years, using a science-based and pragmatic approach in our work. Our chapter in particular understands how vulnerable a state like New Jersey is to a changing climate, specifically from accelerating sea level rise and more frequent and intense coastal storms. The science is clear: The situation is only going to worsen unless we move away from our reliance on fossil fuels and towards a clean energy future.

In order to achieve the carbon reduction goals necessary to mitigate the devastating effects of a changing climate on New Jersey, we need to embrace Governor Murphy's goal to have 11 gigawatts of energy produced by ocean wind turbines by the year 2040. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, 51.3% of the state's electricity was produced by natural gas plants in 2022. Only 8% of the state's energy was produced by non-nuclear renewable sources, with wind generating only a small fraction of a percent of that total. This must change if we are to reach our goal of 100% clean energy by 2035.

With hundreds of miles of shoreline and strong wind flows in the Atlantic Ocean, New Jersey is perfectly positioned to be a climate leader and build the nation's largest network of responsibly developed offshore wind projects that can provide renewable and reliable energy to power New Jersey's homes, businesses, and economy and the BPU's fourth round of solicitation will enable us to continue our work towards this goal.

We appreciate the guidance document requires that each proposed wind project must elaborate on the steps they will take to protect the environment and minimize or mitigate disturbance to ecosystems. TNC-NJ believes that with due diligence and proper siting, clean energy infrastructure and wildlife can



successfully coexist and that in fact the future and survival of numerous species depends on mitigating climate change by reducing our emissions.

The Nature Conservancy recognizes that along the Atlantic coast of the U.S., offshore wind offers incredible potential to generate clean, renewable energy nearby to the cities and communities that need it most. We thank the New Jersey BPU for the work they are doing to set us on the path toward attaining our regional and national decarbonization goals through a strong, fair, and environmentally responsible offshore wind industry in the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our comments on this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eric Olsen
Director of Conservation Programs
The Nature Conservancy
New Jersey