From:	Thomas, Donna [BPU]
To:	Thomas, Donna [BPU]
Subject:	FW: Concerns Regarding High-Risk Power Lines Near Residential Neighborhoods, offshore wind turbines and excavating a White Swan super fund site (Docket # QO23100719)
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From: O'Brien, Bina <binao@fallonmedica.com>
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2024 11:45 AM
To: Secretary, BPUBoard [BPU] <Board.Secretary@bpu.nj.gov>
Cc: Elizabeth DeFeo <bethdefeo@gmail.com>; O'Brien, Bina <binao@fallonmedica.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns Regarding High-Risk Power Lines Near Residential Neighborhoods, offshore wind turbines and excavating a White Swan super fund site (Docket # QO23100719)

10/11/24

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State of New Jersey
Secretary to the Board
Board of Public Utilities
44 S. Clinton Ave
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Board Secretary:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concern regarding the installation and proximity of high-voltage power lines near residential neighborhoods in our community. While I understand the necessity of ensuring reliable electricity distribution, the placement of these power lines poses significant risks to the health, safety, and well-being of local residents.
There are several issues that I would like to highlight:

1. **Health Risks**: Numerous studies have raised concerns about the potential health risks associated with prolonged exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) from high-voltage power lines. These risks may include an increased likelihood of certain cancers, neurological disorders, and other health complications. As a precautionary measure, it is imperative that these power lines be relocated to areas where they do not directly impact residents, especially vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. Running these power lines down the bike path, which is in close proximity to my home, will not only shut the path down for years but is also close to homes, schools, restaurants, and parks exposing families and children to increased risks of major health issues.
2. **Impact on Property Values**: The presence of power lines in close proximity to homes often leads to a decline in property values. This affects the financial security of homeowners who have invested in their homes, only to see their property's worth diminish due to infrastructure developments that compromise health and safety of those near the lines.
3. **Environmental Impact**: The installation of high-voltage power lines often involves significant land clearance and habitat destruction, which can negatively impact local wildlife and ecosystems. I urge the government to explore alternative, more environmentally friendly methods of energy distribution that prioritize sustainability.

As part of the installation of the high-risk power lines, it is proposed that the selected vendor will excavate the White Swan superfund site on the Wall/Manasquan circle. As you know, superfund sites are designated as hazardous due to the contamination present in the soil, groundwater, or air, and any disturbance of these areas poses serious risks to public health and the environment. By doing this, you are releasing toxic contaminants in the soil and groundwater which can release hazardous substances into the air exposing residents and worker to dangerous chemicals, as well as polluting drinking water.

There have been no discussions on these risks, remediation plans, or mitigation of any exposure. Full transparency on these plans is critical to ensuring that public health and environmental standards are upheld. Comprehensive environmental reviews should be carried out before any further work is allowed to proceed and residents should be informed of the outcome of this research.
Additionally, I am writing to express further concerns regarding the installation of wind turbines in the ocean near our coastline. While I fully support the transition to renewable energy and the reduction of carbon emissions, I believe that the placement of wind farms in our coastal waters raises significant issues that must be addressed before this project can begin.

1. Environmental Impact:
The construction and operation of offshore wind farms can have a detrimental effect on marine ecosystems. The noise pollution during construction, vibration from turbines, and electromagnetic fields from transmission cables may disrupt marine life, including fish, marine mammals, and migratory birds. Sensitive habitats could be disturbed, and the long-term ecological consequences are still not fully understood.
2. Impact on Fishing Industries:
Local communities rely on fishing as a key economic activity. The introduction of wind farms in the ocean could restrict access to prime fishing areas, disrupt fish migration patterns, and lead to a decline in fish populations. This would have a direct impact on the livelihoods of those working in the fishing industry and ripple effects throughout local economies.
3. Visual and Aesthetic Concerns:
The visual impact of large-scale wind turbines can alter the natural beauty of coastal areas. These towering structures can be seen from the shoreline, affecting the scenic views that residents and visitors cherish. Coastal tourism, which is a major source of revenue for this area, could suffer if the visual appeal of the oceanfront is compromised.
4. Navigational Hazards:
The placement of wind turbines in busy shipping lanes or near recreational boating areas can pose a significant navigational hazard. Collisions, accidents, or interference with maritime activities could occur if proper precautions are not taken.
5. Uncertainty of Long-Term Benefits:
While wind energy may be a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels, there are concerns about the efficiency and reliability of offshore wind farms, especially considering the high costs of construction, maintenance, and transmission infrastructure. It is crucial to ensure that the long-term benefits of these projects justify the environmental and economic costs. The cost of this development project will significantly increase our power bill which are already through the roof and will use taxpayer dollars for something that most residents are against.

I respectfully request that the government reconsiders the placement of these power lines and investigates safer alternatives, such as relocating them to less populated areas. Public health, safety, and environmental sustainability must be prioritized over cost efficiency. Of the examples discussed in the meeting on October 1, none of those projects were in residential areas so the outcome and future potential health risks are unknows. The “experts” claim that this is completely safe but let me remind you that the Christine Todd Whitman also said the air around the Twin Towers was safe, but we know now that was not the case and lives have been lost because of those “expert” opinions.

I also encourage the government to hold more public consultations, allowing residents to voice their concerns and participate in discussions on this important matter. Transparency and collaboration with the community will ensure that the best decisions are made for the well-being of all.
Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your response and any updates regarding actions being taken to address these concerns.

Sincerely,
Bina O'Brien

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