

Submitted electronically at board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov

Secretary of the Board
44 South Clinton Avenue
1st Floor P.O. Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350

RE: Docket Number QO23100719. In the matter of the opening of a solicitation for a transmission infrastructure project to support New Jersey's offshore wind public policy.

On behalf of the National Wildlife Federation and our members and supporters across New Jersey, we support the efforts of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to solicit proposals regarding the Prebuild Infrastructure (PBI). The PBI, which is an innovative plan to minimize transmission infrastructure and environmental impacts while maximizing New Jersey residents' access to renewable offshore energy, will help connect up to 3,742 megawatts to the grid.

At the National Wildlife Federation, we work nationally, as well as at regional, state, and local levels to ensure that offshore wind is developed responsibly in ways that protect wildlife and communities. We define responsible development as development and planning which: (i) avoids, minimizes, mitigates, and monitors adverse impacts on marine and coastal habitats and the wildlife that rely on them, (ii) minimizes negative impacts on other ocean uses, (iii) includes robust consultation with Native American tribes and communities, (iv) meaningfully engages state and local governments and stakeholders from the outset, (v) includes comprehensive efforts to both avoid negative impacts to underserved communities and deliver concrete benefits to those communities, and (vi) uses the best available scientific and technological data to ensure science-based and stakeholder-informed decision making.

We applaud New Jersey's ambitious offshore wind goal of procuring 11,000 megawatts by 2040, and we continue to support the state's forward-thinking requirement for per-megawatt funding to the Research and Monitoring Initiative. This funding is critical to deepening our understanding of the potential impacts of offshore wind on wildlife, ensuring that development aligns with ecological protections.

With a project already approved off New Jersey's coast— Atlantic Shores South—and additional projects like Leading Light Wind and Bluepoint Wind in the pipeline, it is essential for the state to act swiftly and efficiently to bring this energy to the grid. The PBI offers a crucial mechanism for achieving this by consolidating transmission infrastructure. By co-locating transmission from multiple projects at the Sea Girt National Guard Training Center and connecting it to the Larrabee Collector Station, New Jersey will reduce the need for redundant cabling and minimize disturbances to marine habitats and coastal communities.

This streamlined approach sets a powerful national precedent by demonstrating that we can advance renewable energy goals while protecting environmental and social interests. New Jersey's leadership in optimizing transmission infrastructure through the PBI ensures a more responsible and efficient pathway to clean energy.

Sincerely,

Shayna Steingard
Senior Policy Specialist, Offshore Wind Energy
National Wildlife Federation