



PRESS STATEMENT

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IGNORING ALARMING SIGNS OF AN INDUSTRY IN TURMOIL, GOVERNOR’S BPU OBLIGATES NEW JERSEY’S FUTURE TO COSTLY, RECKLESS OFFSHORE WIND POWER PLANTS

COA Responds to NJ Doubling Offshore Wind Energy in Announcing Third Offshore Wind Energy Solicitation Decision

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities announced Third Offshore Wind Solicitation contracts in the amount of 3,740 more megawatts of offshore wind energy that commit the state to doubling the industrialization of the ocean. Today’s announcement is irresponsible and reckless and puts the ocean at risk. It rejects the sound call to action issued by Clean Ocean Action in October 2023, that was supported by over 2,747 people, to cancel the Third Offshore Wind Energy Solicitation.

Amid the increasing financial, technical, economic, and scientific uncertainties within the offshore wind (OSW) industry, as well as increasing threats to the marine ecosystem, the awarded contracts for the Third OSW Solicitation fails the test of good governance, fiscal responsibility, and due diligence. A reasonable decision would have been to cancel or, at minimum, pause the solicitation and await the results of the pending federal cost/benefit analysis by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

New Jersey already has 3,750 megawatts (MW) of OSW projects in various states of delay or that have been cancelled. Why commit the public and marine life to pay the additional exorbitant costs with so much unknown? For the land alone, the two companies awarded contracts today paid \$1.44 billion for the leases from the federal government, and billions more are needed to build the project; how is this going to be economically sustainable?

The Governor and NJBPU have an obligation as public servants to protect the public interest, which includes stewardship of all our resources. It would have been beneficial to all stakeholders involved, including the offshore wind industry itself, to await the outcomes of studies and investigations, both proposed and in progress, before awarding these contracts.

The true impacts of OSW energy development are not known. The current push for OSW is an unprecedented invasion and massive experiment on the ocean, marine ecosystem, thousands of livelihoods, and the quiet seaside culture that millions enjoy from around the world.

BACKGROUND ON COA CAMPAIGN TO STOP THIRD SOLICITATION:

In October 2023, Clean Ocean Action, the region’s ocean advocacy group of 40 years, penned and [sent a letter](#) to Governor Murphy and Christine Guhl-Sadovy, the NJBPU President. The letter reads: “In the name of good governance, fiscal responsibility, and environmental stewardship, Clean Ocean Action (‘COA’) calls upon the New Jersey executive and legislative branches to cancel the massive third solicitation of offshore wind project bids, which could more than double the state’s current

development obligation.”¹ Clean Ocean Action urged that no awards should be given until more information is known about the economic and environmental feasibility of OSW energy development on the New Jersey coast. The group received no response from the NJBPU despite follow-up calls. COA also presented testimony during NJBPU’s quarterly public meeting in December 2023, urging the cancellation or pause of the Third OSW Solicitation. A [petition](#) organized by Clean Ocean Action to gather support for the cancellation of New Jersey’s Third Solicitation for offshore wind energy obtained 2,747 signatures (to date). For more than 15 years, COA has actively participated in the federal, state, and local review processes for the offshore wind lease areas and projects off New York and New Jersey, providing testimony and submitting numerous, lengthy, detailed comments based on available science and potential impacts to the ocean in an attempt to demand reasonable and responsible offshore wind development.

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¹ *New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Opens Third Offshore Wind Solicitation of Between 1.2 GW and 4 GW*, N.J. BD. OF PUB. UTILS. (March 6, 2023), <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2023/approved/20230306.html>