Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce,

As you finalize priorities for the Fiscal Year 2022 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill, we respectfully request the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Office of Renewable Energy Programs and Environmental Studies Program receive the highest level of funding possible to better support offshore wind energy.

President Biden has called for a dramatic increase in offshore wind deployment as part of his Build Back Better Plan. On March 29, 2021, the Administration announced a new commitment to generate 30 gigawatts of offshore wind in the United States by 2030. To meet the President's clean energy goals and achieve the economic and environmental benefits from offshore wind, Congress must ensure that BOEM is adequately funded.

As you know, BOEM is the lead agency tasked with leasing federal waters for offshore wind development, issuing permitting authorizations, and approving project construction and operations plans. To date, BOEM has issued 15 federal leases, bringing $473 million to the U.S. Treasury, and BOEM is currently reviewing 12 construction and operations plans, representing almost 11,000 megawatts of new electricity. In the coming fiscal year, lease sales and planning efforts are anticipated offshore New York, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, Gulf of Maine, and Oregon. The agency also anticipates receiving another 5 construction and operations plans in the next year.

Within BOEM, the Office of Renewable Energy Programs is responsible for carefully developing renewable energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf through planning, stakeholder engagement, comprehensive environmental analysis, and sound technical review. Despite its good work, this office has historically been severely understaffed and under resourced.

Burdens on the Office of Renewable Energy Programs will dramatically increase in the next year as BOEM is currently conducting environmental reviews of two projects and has announced its intent to initiate review of ten additional projects and hold a lease sale in the New York Bight by early 2022. Without a significant funding increase, BOEM and the Office of Renewable Energy Programs will struggle to hold additional competitive lease auctions, process ongoing construction and operation plans, and conduct stakeholder engagement and intergovernmental coordination. In addition, BOEM relies on its Environmental Studies Program to produce rigorous scientific research that help inform its policy decisions. Investments in this critical research are needed to assess, manage, mitigate, and avoid impacts on human, marine, and coastal environments. To handle all of these activities in the near-term and build offshore wind expertise to meet climate goals in the long-term, BOEM requires significantly more funding for the Office of Renewable Energy Programs and Environmental Studies Program.

In order to realize the abundant economic and environmental benefits from offshore wind, Congress must ensure that BOEM is adequately funded, which is why we respectfully ask that you provide the highest appropriation possible for BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs and Environmental Studies Program.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress (NY-04)

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress (NJ-09)

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Member of Congress

FY 2022 BOEM OFFSHORE WIND APPROPRIATIONS SIGNATORIES

/s/ Rep. William Timmons

/s/ Rep. Tom Malinowski

/s/ Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez

/s/ Rep. Yvette D. Clarke

/s/ Rep. Mondaire Jones

/s/ Rep. Andy Kim

/s/ Rep. Thomas R. Suozzi

/s/ Rep. Elaine G. Luria

/s/ Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García

/s/ Rep. Jim Himes

/s/ Rep. Paul D. Tonko

/s/ Rep. Chris Pappas

/s/ Rep. Diana DeGette

/s/ Rep. Deborah K. Ross

/s/ Rep. Joe Courtney

/s/ Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.

/s/ Rep. Julia Brownley

/s/ Rep. Earl Blumenauer

/s/ Rep. Abigail D. Spanberger

/s/ Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott

/s/ Rep. A Donald McEachin

/s/ Rep. Donald S. Beyer Jr.

/s/ Rep. Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.

/s/ Rep. Robin L. Kelly