



Caesar Rodney Institute
Center for Energy Competitiveness
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Governor John Carney
Tatnall Building, 2nd Floor
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. South
Dover, DE 19901

10/15/2019

RE: Offshore Wind Threatens Beach Economy

Dear Governor Carney,

One of the true joys of visiting the ocean is the chance to stare out on a crystal clear day and let the mind wander to the mysteries that lie over the horizon, and to enjoy the pure beauty. It is rejuvenating. Have you ever watched with wonder as the moon rises over the ocean? Politicians in Washington and Maryland have decided to take that view away on Delaware beaches, and to fill the night sky with red flashing aircraft warning lights¹. In a few years the world's largest industrial wind turbines will fill the horizon from Rehoboth Beach to Fenwick Island at six times the height of typical cell phone towers.

Not only will our views be lost, but our economy will suffer. A number of surveys², including one from the University of Delaware, indicate perhaps 15 to 35 percent of tourists will stop coming as the view degenerates. The Delaware Tourism Office reported in 2016, tourism contributed \$3 billion to Delaware's gross domestic product, sustained over 41,000 direct jobs, and generated \$470 million in taxes and fees for state and local government. Beach rentals alone contributed \$1 billion. Reduced tourism could cost several hundred million dollars a year easily overwhelming the one time offer to contribute \$18 million for improvements at the Fenwick Island State Park for landing a power cable there.

I know your interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Has anyone told you your goal of a 26 percent reduction by 2025 was most likely met in 2018 with a 29 percent drop? Besides, when the Maryland Public Service Commission approved the industrial wind project off our shores their consultant told them the project would merely offset onshore wind projects³. Offshore wind is three to four times as expensive as onshore wind, and a lot more turbines could be built on land for the cost of this project. Offshore wind is not the best route to reduce emissions.

The University of Delaware used 574 feet tall turbines in its study, and the North Carolina State study used 500 feet. Both found such turbines might be acceptable to some renters at an 8 mile distance. However, the currently proposed fifteen, 853 feet tall, 12 megawatt turbines would have to be at least 13 miles offshore to be acceptable to the same renters. While the first phase of the Skipjack offshore project will be placed at the farthest reaches of the lease space (17 miles), the lease area is large enough to add about thirty-five additional turbines. The lease area comes as close to shore as 13 miles near Rehoboth Beach, and averages 15 miles down Delaware's entire shoreline. A map of the lease area, just beyond shipping lanes, is pictured below. Those who want no visibility of turbines will still not come. Are these projects worth the risk to our beach economy?

Up till now, Delaware beach towns have had no say. The proposed industrial sized project was approved in Maryland, whose electric customers will pay for the project, and Ørsted has acquired an offshore lease from the U.S. Department of Interior. While the citizens of Delaware can't reverse those decisions, finding a location to bring the power ashore is a major obstacle to building the project.

Potentially, beach communities could oppose bringing the power ashore in Delaware. Ocean City's Mayor, and City Council have resisted the construction of wind turbines visible from the shoreline for good reason, and have requested the smaller, 8 megawatt turbines be at least 26 miles from the coast. See the graphic below from the 12 megawatt turbine manufacturer who compares the proposed 853' size to New York's Chrysler Building. These turbines will dwarf the Statue of Liberty, and will be visible, especially from taller buildings.

The Skipjack power cable landfall was originally supposed to be in Ocean City. An information request to Ocean City led to the following comment from City Engineer, Terry McGean, "Although we have never been 'formally' approached by either developer, Skipjack has informally approached the City about a landfall in Ocean City and they were told that the City would oppose any landfall for a farm visible from our shoreline or any landfall for any project with any above ground equipment located outside the footprint of an existing DPL sub-station".

The Cape Wind project in Massachusetts failed partially because of 25 legal appeals from water front property owners concerned about property values according to the developers as reported in the Vineyard Gazette. It is not right Maryland's state government make decisions that will affect the entire Delaware beach economy. Beyond the contribution to improvements to one Delaware state park, the project offers little, or no economic benefits to Delaware. It is not out of line for Delaware beach towns to consider similar concerns.

The Skipjack project will not start construction for at least two more years. I urge you to take the time, and delay signing any agreement on transmission cable location until the resort towns have thoroughly reviewed the impact of the turbines through public outreach similar to the serious debate that resulted in resolutions opposing offshore oil well drilling. Please slow this project down.

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CC: DNREC Administrator Shawn Garvin, Administrator Operations and Maintenance Mathew Ritter, Rep. Pete Schwarzkopf, Rep. Ron Gray, Rep. Steve Smyk, Senator Ernesto Lopez, Senator Gerald Hocker, Mayors of Fenwick, South Bethany, Bethany Beach, Dewey Beach, Rehoboth Beach, Lewes, Sussex County Councilmen IG Burton and Doug Hudson, DE Office of Tourism, and local Chambers of Commerce

Notes:

- 1) Go to You Tube and insert the URL's to see videos of wind turbines at night
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxjZf8Afr18> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bABhodyX2nY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUadSaNd5Yo> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDztGwEqiwQ>
- 2) U.S. Bureau of Energy Management, University of Delaware, "Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Development: Values and Implications for Recreation and Tourism", March 2018, Authors: George Parsons and Jeremy Firestone, <https://www.boem.gov/espi/5/5662.pdf>, North Carolina State University, "The Amenity Costs of Offshore Wind Farms: Evidence from A Choice Experiment",

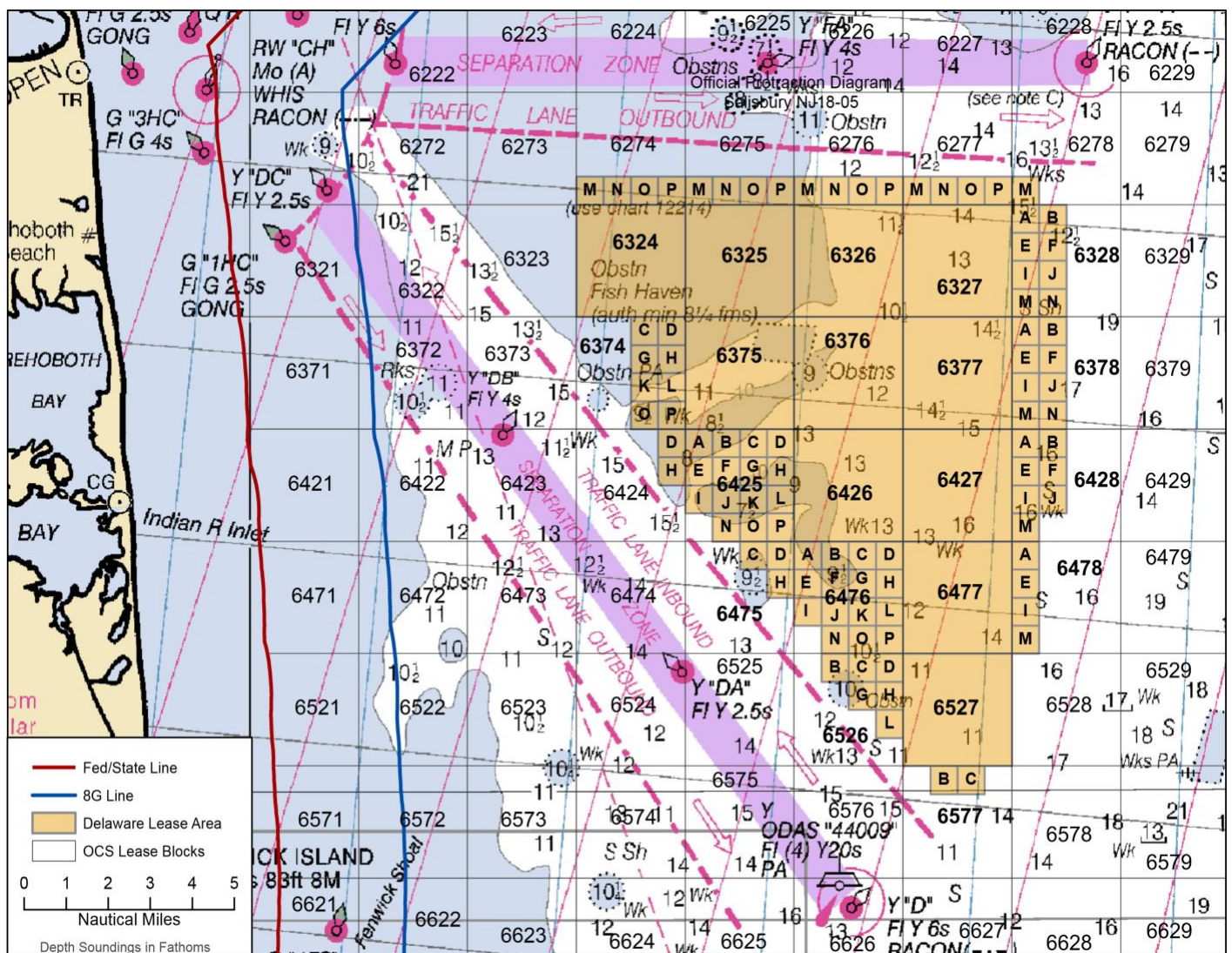


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March 216, Lutzeyer ET. al., https://cenrep.ncsu.edu/cenrep/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/LPT_Offshore-Wind.pdf

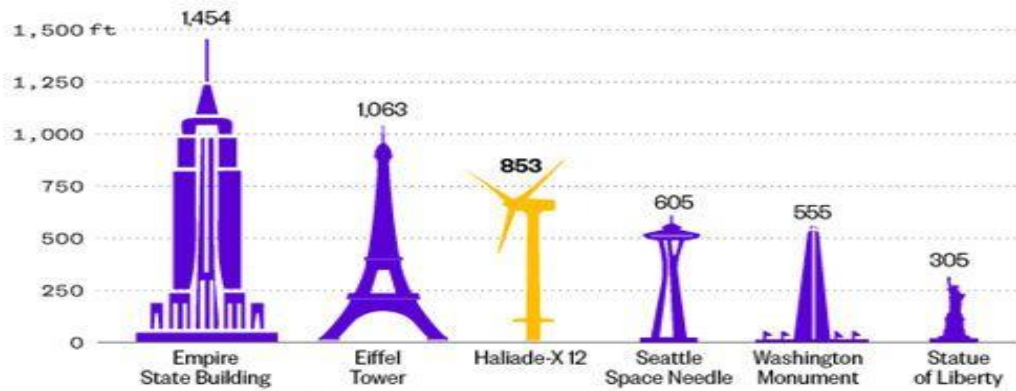
- 3) Levitan and Associates Inc. for the Maryland Public Service Commission Docket 9431 item 85, "Evaluation and Comparison of US Wind and Skipjack Proposed Offshore Wind Project Applications" page ES33, revised public version, March 17, 2017, <https://www.psc.state.md.us/search-results/?q=9431&search=all&search=case&x.x=19&x.y=9>

Skipjack Lease Area from Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
https://www.boem.gov/uploadedFiles/BOEM/Renewable_Energy_Program/State_Activities/de_lease_area_noaa%20chart.pdf



One colossal wind turbine

General Electric's 853-foot-tall Haliade-X would be the world's tallest offshore wind turbine.



Source: GE

