

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2023

Secretary Deb Haaland
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Secretary Haaland:

The Biden administration set an ambitious but achievable target to deploy 30 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind by 2030 and 110 GW by 2050. 11 coastal states now have a collective goal to deploy 77 GW of offshore wind by various deadlines, with 17.6 GW already procured.¹ Congress authorized several programs and allocated funding to aid in achieving these targets. This includes \$150 million for the Department of the Interior (DOI) to bolster its ability to conduct environmental reviews. Given its already robust – and growing – pipeline of offshore wind projects, we urge you to provide a significant amount of those funds to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Without additional resources alongside improvements to siting and permitting processes, projects will stall and may be abandoned altogether. We cannot afford for bureaucracy to be a barrier on our path toward climate safety.

From the time of its inception until now, BOEM has conducted 11 offshore wind lease sales; it currently manages 32 commercial leases.² Since President Biden took office, BOEM has initiated environmental reviews of 10 projects.³ In the coming years, BOEM will need to complete environmental reviews of construction and operations plans (COPs) for projects within any areas that are leased in the next few years, including in the Gulf of Mexico this year and next year in the Central Atlantic, Oregon, and the Gulf of Maine. All of these sales will generate the need for additional environmental reviews of COPs.

Conducting efficient, comprehensive, and timely environmental reviews replete with early and robust input from all ocean users is critical to realizing a successful project. Delays – whether due to a slow and under-resourced process or adverse court decisions resulting from quick and shoddy reviews – will hamper, and possibly lead to a death knell, for project development. Compounded by supply chain challenges, our nascent offshore wind industry is at a perilous point.

BOEM's Renewable Energy and Environmental Program areas must be sufficiently staffed, particularly as their workload increases in an effort to reach the President's targets. In Fiscal

¹ <https://cleanpower.org/resources/the-benefit-and-urgency-of-planned-offshore-transmission/>

² <https://www.klgates.com/BOEM-Proposes-Regulations-to-Improve-Offshore-Wind-Lease-Auction-Processes-and-Project-Development-Timelines-1-20-2023> + 5 Pacific leases

³ <https://www.boem.gov/newsroom/press-releases/boem-seeks-comment-inform-environmental-review-proposed-wind-energy-project>

Year (FY) 21, BOEM's Renewable Energy Program had 71 full time equivalents (FTEs).⁴ Its FY 23 budget requested \$51.7 million to support 106 FTEs.⁵ As you know, these staff not only work on environmental reviews, but also have other responsibilities such as lease sale planning and stakeholder engagement. BOEM will need to fully resource its Environmental Program as well. This program funds environmental studies and assessments that inform its environmental review of COPs, supported 142 FTEs (both conventional and renewable energy) in FY 21, with an appropriation of \$75.9 million.⁶ The FY 23 request was \$86.4 million to support 149 FTEs.⁷ In order to improve its ability to de-risk offshore wind leases and projects in its pipeline, BOEM will need more resources.

Our nation's offshore wind industry holds tremendous promise to employ tens of thousands of American workers while providing a clean, reliable source of power and generating billions of dollars of investment in our economy. But we will not realize this without improvements to our siting and permitting processes. We ask that you ensure BOEM has all the tools and resources it needs to fully deliver on this promise. We stand ready to assist you in that effort.

Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/fy2023-boem-greenbook.pdf>

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*



Julia Brownley
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Yvette D. Clarke
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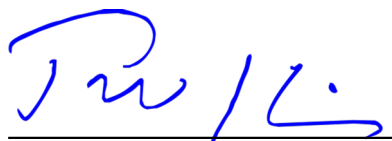
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



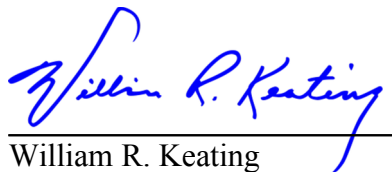
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Member of Congress



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



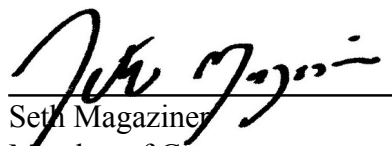
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



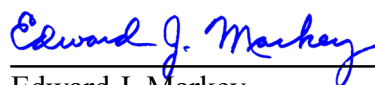
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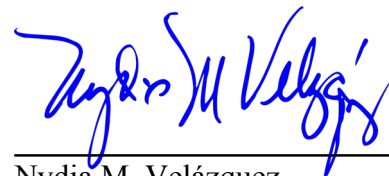
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Mark R. Warner
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Cc: Tommy Beaudreau, Laura Daniel Davis, Liz Klein