

# Protect Our Coast New Jersey

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2023

## **BIG INDUSTRIAL WIND DEVELOPMENT IN PERIL, STILL PLANNED OFF THE JERSEY SHORE**

### **WIND BOONDOGGLE ON THIN ICE**

On September 13, six northeast governors including New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy sent a letter to President Biden warning that goals set for offshore industrial wind development are in jeopardy due to rising inflation, supply chain disruptions and more. The governors' statement read: "Absent intervention, these near-term projects are increasingly at risk of failing. Without federal action, offshore wind deployment in the U.S. is at serious risk of stalling because States' ratepayers may be unable to absorb these significant new costs alone."

Protect Our Coast New Jersey spokesman Robin Shaffer reacted, "does anyone actually believe this is the last time these governors—or Governor Murphy—will go to the Feds to ask for more money for these projects? The massive scale of these projects is unlike anything ever attempted in our coastal waters and one has to wonder if the pricetag was initially underestimated in order to even get the project to the drawing board."

"Asking electric ratepayers and taxpayers to foot ever rising costs to meet arbitrary renewable energy targets is a fool's errand. POCNJ is committed to stop offshore industrial wind development, especially when the costs are so high—to our coastal ecosystem, to marine life, to our economy and to our beautiful Jersey shore that so many families treasure."

### **FEDS ISSUE NEW EXCEPTIONS ALLOWING FOR THE KILLING OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS**

On September 13, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued Orsted a construction authorization for its activities in constructing monopiles, turbines and other offshore wind infrastructure for Ocean Wind 1, a 98 turbine industrial offshore wind facility off the southern New Jersey coast. The authorization grants exceptions to the protections of marine life under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The final rules allow for Orsted and its subsidiaries to exercise Level A harassment- defined as any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (16 U.S.C. 1362(18); 50 CFR 216.3)—in the construction of Ocean Wind 1. Researchers close to the issue contend that Level A harassment, as practiced, in ocean surveying to date, has led to the death of marine mammals. 62 whales have died along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in 2023, with two dozen washing ashore in New York and New Jersey alone.

A copy of the final rules are available at this site: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/09/13/2023-19351/takes-of-marine-mammals-incident-to-specified-activities-taking-marine-mammals-incident-to-the>

David Shanker, Save the Right Whales Coalition New Jersey spokesperson, responded to the NOAA authorization, "We are appalled by the government's decision today to allow further harassment and murder of marine mammals. On Friday, NOAA Administrator Richard Spinrad received scientific confirmation, via an independent study performed by Rand Acoustics, that survey vessels have been violating the terms of their prior Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHAs) by

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*Protect Our Coast is a 501 (c)(3) designated charitable nonprofit organization that is dedicated to protecting our oceans, our shores, and preserving the views and small businesses that have made the NJ shore a premier vacation destination for over a century. Your tax deductible contributions go towards protecting our coast from industrial destruction so that families may enjoy this special place for generations to come. For more information, please visit <https://protectourcoastnj.com/>*

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changing from the approved devices and decibel levels, rendering the safe zones required by the IHA meaningless. When mammals who rely on hearing to navigate away from danger are bombarded 24x7 with loud sonar pinging it leads to deafness and confusion, which may result in them colliding with danger.

“There has been a complete breakdown in the system designed to protect marine wildlife and protect the North Atlantic right whale from extinction. Save Right Whale has requested emergency action by NMFS and BOEM to address this matter beginning with the immediate revocation of IHAs now active and to police all IHA’s they have already issued and hold violators accountable before issuing any further harassment authorizations.”

*Protect Our Coast New Jersey is a proud partner of the Save the Right Whales Coalition*

## **SIX ARRESTED FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST ON BEHALF OF CLEAN OCEANS**

On September 12, six protesters were arrested in Ocean City as they peacefully protested construction work being done by a contractor of Orsted, the developer of Ocean Wind 1. Those arrested sat and laid on 35<sup>th</sup> street, preventing heavy construction equipment from being used for nearly four hours. The protesters were given a number of warnings by the Ocean City Police Department before being taken into custody.

The construction activity involved tearing up the streets with jackhammers and heavy machinery to dig test pits along the route of high voltage power cables that will traverse Ocean City from the 98 wind turbines planned just offshore to the electrical substation in Beesley’s Point.

On September 10, POCNJ staged a press conference and rally at the 35<sup>th</sup> street beach, the location where the transmission cables will come ashore. Speakers included Congressman Jeff Van Drew, Cape May County Commissioner Bobby Barr, Ocean City Council Member Jody Levchuk, Activist Mike Dean and POCNJ Spokesman Robin Shaffer. In spite of the rainy conditions, 135 people attended the event. Many walked the route of the transmission cables afterwards along 35<sup>th</sup> street to Bay Avenue to Roosevelt Boulevard.

In 2021, Ocean City’s Council denied a variance to allow for the taking of protected land designated under New Jersey’s Green Acres program; however, the state legislature passed a bill stripping Ocean City of its home rule authority in this matter. The land in question was along the path of the transmission cables.

Longtime Ocean City resident and Real Estate Broker Disston Vanderslice summed it up, “Ocean City’s full time and 2nd home residents want no part in this ridiculous and scary project.” He continued, “There is not a single endearing quality in wind turbines off of our coast. The Governor is putting our families at risk, and must be stopped. Not only will this affect the aesthetics of the coast, as well as increase electric costs, most importantly we do not want these lines coming through our neighborhood. The danger this project presents is jarring. If this isn’t stopped soon, I’m afraid of the lasting impact this will have on all aspects of Ocean City and its residents.”

A hearing date has not been announced for the six arrested. Protect Our Coast New Jersey will provide updates as circumstances warrant.

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