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Kathleen Rice, Local Leaders, Members of New York Delegation
Call for Federal Action on Long Island Offshore Wind Development

The group is urging the Department of Interior (DOI) to designate wind development areas in the New York Bight and hold new lease auctions before the end of 2020. Earlier this morning, Rice sent a bipartisan letter to DOI formally calling for the designations with her New York colleagues; Representatives Tom Reed (NY-23), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), Jerrold Nadler (NY-10), Nydia Velázquez (NY-07), Eliot Engel (NY-16), Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), Paul Tonko (NY-20), Gregory Meeks (NY-05), Yvette Clarke (NY-09), Grace Meng (NY-06), and Max Rose (NY-11).

“Offshore wind is a vital part of our renewable energy future in New York and up and down the Eastern Seaboard,” said Rep. Kathleen Rice. “Making the switch to clean, renewable energy is the only chance we have against climate change, so delaying these projects is not only harmful to the environment and to public health, but also a hinderance to our economy which will reap the rewards of thousands of new jobs from this industry. The Department of Interior must move this process forward and clear the way for new offshore wind projects to get underway.”

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), a federal agency within DOI, was scheduled to announce Wind Energy Areas in early 2019. Yet over a year and a half later, the final designations have still not been made. Final designations must be made prior to lease auctions for developers to bid on the right to apply for federal permits to construct wind projects in these areas.

Several individuals and groups joined Rice in supporting the call for action, including New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky, New York Offshore Wind Alliance, New York League of
Conservation Voters, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Climate Jobs NY, Long Island Association, American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) and National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA).

“New York has begun to unleash the potential of wind energy to greatly benefit our environment and economy,” says Senator Todd Kaminsky, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. “But there is so much more left to do, and it all begins with the federal government opening up more space for development. I am pleased to work with Congresswoman Rice to encourage and incentivize the production of clean, renewable energy.”

“The designation and leasing of new wind energy areas (WEAs) in the New York Bight means thousands of family wage jobs for New Yorkers, upgrades and investments in New York ports, reduced pollution and greenhouse gases and billions of dollars in new investments,” said Joe Martens, Director of the New York Offshore Wind Alliance. “The New York Offshore Wind Alliance thanks Congresswoman Rice and the members of the NY Congressional delegation that are urging Secretary Bernhardt to complete the designation and leasing of the NY Bight WEAs. The sooner this process is completed, the sooner New York will reap the enormous jobs, investment and environmental benefits of offshore wind.”

"Leaders like Congresswoman Rice know that clean energy creates green jobs and green jobs are local jobs,” said Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters. “The wind energy areas in the NY Bight represent an untapped potential for Long Island to lead New York State’s effort to reduce its carbon footprint. Investing in these areas is also an important opportunity for our economic recovery. It will create well-paying jobs, slash emissions, and reduce energy costs - a win-win for the environment and the economy. We thank Congresswoman Rice for her partnership on this important issue, and the members of the NY Congressional delegation who joined her in calling on BOEM to finalize the Wind Energy Area designations in the New York Bight.”

“Climate change impacts are already a reality on Long Island. We are documenting sea level rise, warmer temperatures, a loss of cold-water species, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events that put our health, ecosystem, and communities in danger,” said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment. “According to NOAA, we could be heading for a future where our barrier islands and a much of the south shore will be flooded or underwater by 2100. New York must meet its renewable energy goals, decarbonize the power sector, and implement a just transition away from fossil fuels if we are going to fight climate change locally. We cannot meet our state climate change targets without offshore wind, and we cannot afford to wait as the federal government drags its feet in designating wind energy development areas off of our shores. Action today will keep us safer tomorrow.”

“Rep. Kathleen Rice clearly understands what’s at stake. By releasing the final wind energy areas in the NY Bight, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) can propel the offshore wind industry forward in New York and throughout the Northeast,” said Mariah Dignan, Long Island Organizer for Climate Jobs NY. “Climate Jobs NY thanks Congresswoman Rice for her leadership and the dozen local members of congress who signed onto the letter to Secretary Bernhardt. We truly have a once in a generation opportunity to put
Long Island at the center of a green economic recovery. Offshore wind development is poised to create thousands of good union jobs while stabilizing energy costs and having a significant impact on emissions. Our future lies with the clean energy economy.”

“Additional investments in offshore wind and renewable energy jobs will help strengthen the Long Island economy, and thus we support Congresswoman Rice’s efforts to have the Department of Interior designate final Wind Energy Areas in the New York Bight,” said Kevin S. Law, President & CEO of the Long Island Association.

“New York state has established itself as a leader in clean energy commitments and specifically in supporting the development of the offshore wind industry, which stands to deliver a boost to the New York economy during a time when it’s needed most. Recent research shows that offshore wind in the New York Bight holds a big opportunity not only for coastal New Yorkers but across the regional economy,” said Tom Kiernan, Chief Executive Officer at the American Wind Energy Association. “Once this abundant domestic energy source is unleashed, it will deliver tens of thousands of new jobs, revitalize communities and expand manufacturing opportunities that will benefit both the economy and the environment. The time is now to turn this into a reality and we applaud Representative Rice for urging the Department of Interior designate the final wind energy areas and hold new lease auctions in the New York Bight.”

“Businesses across America are ready to invest, hire and build new offshore wind projects. A new study by Wood Mackenzie predicts that the next expected wind lease sale offshore New York could support more than 32,000 jobs annually and more than $3.2 billion in annual wages during the development and construction phase alone,” said Erik Milito, President of the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA). “Once the U.S. Department of the Interior holds new offshore wind lease sales, New Yorkers and other Americans will welcome a much-needed boost of infrastructure spending, energy security, and shovel-ready jobs with good wages.”

**New York State Offshore Wind Background:**
Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act on July 18, 2019, which established a legally binding commitment to generate 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, enough energy to power up to six million homes. Currently, New York State is poised to benefit from three proposed offshore wind projects in federal waters: Empire Wind (816 megawatts, 15-20 miles south of Jones Beach), Sunrise Wind (880 megawatts, 30 miles east of Montauk), and South Fork Wind (130 megawatts, 35 miles east of Montauk). Additional projects are needed in order for the state to achieve 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2035. However, new projects cannot get underway until BOEM finalizes the Wind Energy Areas and holds new lease auctions.

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