

SAVE LONG BEACH ISLAND INC. STATEMENT REGARDING HALT TO EMPIRE WIND PROJECT.

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR DOUG BURGUM ORDERS HALT TO EMPIRE WIND PROJECT; *the Reasons Are Not Hard to Find.*

On **April 16, 2025** U.S. Secretary of the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum issued a Directive to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to “order Empire Wind to cease all construction activities” at the location of its offshore wind project off of northern New Jersey and south of New York City. The Secretary indicated that “staff of the Department of the Interior has obtained information that raises serious issues with respect to the project approvals for” the project and that “the project was rushed through by the prior Administration.”

According to the Washington Free Beacon, an Equinor spokesman for the Empire Wind project stated that “we will engage directly with BOEM and the Department of interior to understand the questions raised about the permits we have received from authorities”.

Those questions are easily answered.

As early as **November 29, 2024**, Save Long Beach Island (LBI) wrote to Governor Douglas Burgum pointing out the criteria in the law for lease cancellation and showing how the Atlantic Shores project met those criteria. Similar reasons are there for the Empire Wind project.

On **January 13, 2025**, Save LBI filed a comprehensive lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, U.S. Department of Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind project for violations of a number of federal environmental statutes: the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the Clean Air Act. It provided a compelling case demonstrating that these federal agencies were derelict in their respective duties to take critical information into account, and made arbitrary assumptions that entirely failed to disclose and consider the injurious impacts of the Atlantic Shores South project. Similar methodologies were used for the Empire Wind project.

On **February 18th 2025**, Save LBI wrote to Secretaries Burgum and Lutnick pointing out numerous defects in how the impact to marine mammals were calculated and systematically underestimated for the Endangered Species Act Biological Opinion approval for the Atlantic Shores project. The same methodology was used for the Empire Wind project.

On **March 31, 2025**, Save LBI filed a 242-page petition with both Secretaries asking to designate a safe migration corridor along the East Coast for the North Atlantic right whale to avoid the obstruction of their essential migration that would be caused by the operational noise by wind complexes placed within it. Both the Atlantic Shores project and the Empire Wind project have been placed in that corridor. That petition contains a detailed numerical analysis of the impacts of operational noise on the whales migration, which both the Atlantic Shores project and the Empire Wind project failed to do in their Endangered Species Act or Marine Mammal Protection Act applications. To preserve the corridor while the Secretaries reviewed the petition, it specifically asked that Empire Wind project construction be paused.

On **April 1, 2025**, NOAA contacted Save LBI. On **April 5, 2025**, Save LBI **emailed requested technical documentation to NOAA Fisheries, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources.**

Finally, **Save LBI made known its intent to file a lawsuit against Empire Wind** through an announcement by a co-plaintiff just days before Secretary Burgum issued his decision.

The pretense that these projects are benign, that there is no evidence of them causing harm, and that their impact analyses has been done properly needs to end. The evidence for their disapproval is there, proponents need to read it.

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