

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

December 17, 2023

Urgent Call to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – Defend Our Ocean and Preserve Our Shore!

Save Long Beach Island Inc. calls on the DEP not to find the Atlantic Shores South offshore wind project consistent with our Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) rules.

Atlantic Shores (AS) is proposing three projects that will be the most intrusive large modern offshore wind development in the entire world! At just 8.7 miles off the NJ shore they will be by far the closest in of any such large projects contemplated in the United States or elsewhere. Furthermore, these projects will intersect the migration path of the severely endangered North American Right Whale and threaten marine life.

Based on our review of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the first two AS projects (Atlantic Shores South), Save LBI strongly believes that the damage to the marine ecology, to the human ecology (fishing, tourism, the shore communities), and to the NJ economy, from this massive industrialization of our near ocean is unacceptable. The costs, damages, and risks far outweigh the purported benefits.

The DEIS admits that these projects are not "game changers" when it comes to addressing global warming/climate change. They would result in only "a negligible beneficial impact in the global context".

The Bureau of Public Utilities decisions to date show that ratepayers will bear a heavy burden to support such economically questionable projects. Now even higher ratepayer subsidies are being proposed.

Job claims are misleading. Most of the jobs will be temporary construction jobs, not permanent operations jobs. And most of the early jobs are likely to go to foreign workers (the DEIS suggests 45-65 percent). And that does not count the LOSS of jobs in the tourism and fisheries industries, nor to the overall NJ economy from the sky high electricity pricing. Any real job gains, if any, will come at very high financial cost.

The DEIS also documents significant expected negative environmental impacts.

It judges Major negative impacts on: Commercial Fishing, Cultural Resources (27 above ground historical properties will be impacted), Military and National Security (particularly USCG Search and Rescue Operations), Scientific Research, and Scenic and Visual Resources (29 national, state, and local preserves, 26 municipalities with ocean beaches, and another 12 that have ocean views but no beaches that will be impacted).

It judges Moderate negative impacts on: Benthic Resources, Birds, Finfish Invertebrates and Essential Fish Habitats, Marine Mammals, Wetlands, Recreational for hire fishing, Environmental Justice, Navigation and Vessel Traffic, and Radar Systems.

NJ does NOT have to accept the harsh consequences of this massive industrialization of our ocean. Currently the NJ DEP is reviewing a request by Atlantic Shores to certify that the first two AS projects are consistent with NJ CZMA rules, and it must license parts of the project that are in State waters and on land. The NJ CZMA regulations were designed to prevent such industrialization impacts on our coastal environment - even for a "favored" source of energy. The DEP should enforce the CZMA regulations, and deny the AS certification request.

Among the CZMA program goals are to:

"...protect, enhance and restore coastal habitats and their living resources ... promote biodiversity, water quality, aesthetics, recreation, and healthy coastal ecosystems; ... attain sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries; ... protect natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources, promote safe navigation and provide recreational opportunities; ... preserve and enhance views of the coastal landscape to enrich aesthetic and cultural values and vital communities; ... preserve, enhance and restore open space including natural, scenic, historic and ecologically important landscapes that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation; ... manage coastal activities that sustain coastal economies and create vibrant coastal communities and waterfronts".

No open minded reader who compares those CZMA goals (or the specific implementing rules themselves) with the DEIS described impacts can conclude that the AS projects are consistent with the CZMA s rules. We call on the DEP to do its job: enforce the CZMA regulations, refuse to certify consistency, and insist on responsive alternatives.

Let's work together to save our planet while also protecting our ocean and our shore!

Join Save LBI in urging the NJ DEP to reject the Atlantic Shores certification . Visit our website SaveLBI.org to learn more about how you can make a difference.

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