

Press Release
Save LBI
PO Box 579
Ship Bottom, NJ 08008
www.savelbi.org

For immediate release:

February 23, 2023

Save LBI calls on President Biden to order a Mid-Course Change to the Offshore Wind Energy Program to preserve the migration of the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale.

In a 20-page letter to President Biden dated February 15, 2023, a detailed, quantitative case study for the project proposed off Long Beach Island (LBI) concludes that turbine operation there poses an insurmountable problem for the right whale's migration. Key findings include:

- There are two wind complexes proposed off LBI, the close-in Atlantic Shores project from 9 to 20 miles out, and the New York Bight areas from 33 to 70 miles out.
- The underwater noise from the operation of turbines just from the full Atlantic Shores project would create sound levels **above 130 decibels(dB) from shore out to 93 miles**, at least *10 times* as intense as the federal criteria for disturbing the whale's behavior. Noise from turbine operation in the New York Bight lease areas will increase those levels even more.
- Based on actual field studies, the whale will strongly avoid that noise level and try to continue its migration, but it has no plausible options.
- There is no low-level noise route close to shore, through or between the two wind complexes.
- There has been **no significant migration** of the right whale **beyond 86 miles** from shore, and it is not plausible to expect it to go well beyond that to avoid the noise from the outer NY Bight lease areas.
- Therefore, the turbine operation of the Atlantic Shores **project will very likely block the whale's essential migration** off of New Jersey.
- A number of selected wind energy areas along the East Coast intersect or are near right whale migration corridors and face similar problems.

Taken together with the unprecedented scale of high-power turbine deployment proposed, the current offshore wind program presents a major threat to the right whale. The potential for non-compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act is clear.

The letter to the President also raises problems with the current implementation of marine mammal protection programs in general, e.g., how noise impacts are estimated and approvals of noise generating activities are supported.

In particular, it provides on pages 15-19 numerical estimates of the noise impact from vessel surveys which show that they could indeed be a cause of the recent whale deaths, warranting a full investigation.

In the interest of both the program and the whale, the letter asks for intervention at the highest level to change a number of the wind energy areas, and establish new program protocols.

Save LBI recognizes the disruption to the current program that entails, but the program already faces disruption in the form of years of growing public concern, acrimony and litigation.

Save LBI calls on the President to make that difficult decision, and **to order that mid-course program change.**

The letter to the President can be found on our website, SaveLBI.org, under the block titled "press releases and presentations".

Contact:

Bob Stern, President
Save LBI
info@savelbi.org
917.952.5016

The letter also raises problems with the current implementation of marine mammal protection programs in general, e.g., how noise impacts are estimated in agency approvals.

In the interest of both the program and the whale, there needs to be intervention at the highest level to change a number of the wind energy areas, and establish new program protocols.

Save LBI recognizes the disruption to the current program that entails, but the program already faces disruption in the form of years of acrimony and litigation.

Save LBI calls on the President to order that mid-course program change.

Contact:

Bob Stern, President

Save LBI

info@savelbi.org

917.952.5016