



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2025

Save Long Beach Island, Inc. (Save LBI)
P.O. Box 2087
Long Beach Township, NJ, 08008
www.SaveLBI.org

Contacts:

Denise Boccia, Lead Researcher, Board Member
Email: deniseboccia88@gmail.com
Phone: 347-752-0133

Bob Stern, Ph.D., President
Email: info@savelbi.org
Phone: 917-952-5016

Save LBI Petitions Federal Agencies to Create a Safe Migration Corridor Along the East Coast to Save the North Atlantic Right Whale from Extinction

BEACH HAVEN, NEW JERSEY, April 7, 2025 – Save LBI, the non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting our oceans from the destructive impacts of offshore wind projects, has filed a petition urging the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Department of the Interior (DOI)/Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to create a safe migration corridor from Maine to Georgia that will allow the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale (NARW) to survive as a species.

With a population that has dwindled to 340, the magnificent right whale is perilously close to extinction and faces a new, greater and ominous threat from numerous proposed offshore wind-turbine complexes up and down the East Coast.

Save LBI's 234-page petition seeks to establish a migratory corridor as a critical habitat that would provide a vital "missing link" between critical habitats the NMFS designated in 1994, and later expanded, to protect the right whale's feeding grounds off the coast of Maine (and New England) and its calving grounds off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. No habitat

protections currently exist between these areas in the far north and south, putting the whale's survival at great risk.

Central to the petition is the call to prohibit offshore wind development within the proposed protected zone and to establish a buffer that would allow noise from any nearby wind turbines to dissipate and drop below levels known to disturb the whales.

“Restricting the development of offshore wind projects in the migration path of the North Atlantic right whale is crucial to preventing its extinction,” explained Bob Stern, president and co-founder of Save LBI. “Our petition defines the whale’s primary historic migration corridor and presents calculations showing how operational noise from the numerous proposed offshore wind turbine complexes will at a minimum seriously impair and potentially block its annual migration. **Without a protected migration corridor and a prohibition on wind complexes in its path, the North Atlantic right whale *will not survive.***”

Save LBI data reveals that nearly 80 percent of NARW deaths between 2000 and 2020 occurred within the proposed critical habitat migration corridor — even though vessel speed-restriction zones have been in place since 2008.

“Sadly, all efforts to date have not reversed the decline of the right whale,” emphasized Stern, an experienced Ph.D. engineer who managed the U.S. Department of Energy office overseeing environment protection related to energy programs. “The threat is real. The Atlantic Shores South and North projects less than 9 miles off the coast of southern New Jersey, and others like it, are sited directly in the whale’s migratory path, which will accelerate and ultimately seal its extinction unless we act.” (For more on the Atlantic Shores projects, click [here](#).)

The Save LBI petition also seeks new federal rules that would...

- Cancel wind-energy lease areas within the corridor consistent with the designation of a critical migration habitat.
- Reinitiate Endangered Species Act [Section 7(a)(2)] consultations where, based on regulation criteria, the designated habitat “may be affected” by a wind project.
- Establish a dedicated general taxpayer fund to defray potential costs associated with any new restrictions from the critical habitat designation that would otherwise be borne by specific industries, including shipping and fishing enterprises.

Pending the outcome of a rulemaking decision, the Save LBI petition further aims to preserve the proposed migration corridor in the interim by...

- Pausing all activities associated with placing wind turbines in the designated area.
- Suspending high-resolution geophysical surveying during the NARW migration season.
- Reinitiating Endangered Species Act [Section 7(a)] consultations based on “new information revealing effects not previously considered” — in this case, as shown in the

petition, major systemic underestimates in the NARW “take number” estimates used to approve Atlantic Shores South and other projects that use the same methods to calculate the number of incidental NARW deaths or injuries likely to occur during construction and operation of an offshore wind-turbine complex.

NARW: A National Treasure

The North Atlantic right whale, also known as the “urban whale,” is one of the largest and longest living animals on earth. This storied creature spends most of its life within 50 miles of the Atlantic coast as it moves gracefully between feeding grounds to the north and calving areas in the south, returning to the same locations annually thanks to its uncanny sense of navigation. Marine mammal migration is one of the great wonders of the world — especially when it involves a rare species such as the NARW — and public fascination is high, which explains the popularity of “whale watching” tours and town festivals up and down the East Coast as well as a preponderance of academic studies devoted to whales. Given a tiny population, every right whale saved is a step toward recovery, and every one lost, a step toward extinction — which is why Save LBI’s well-tailored legal protections are so important.

The Struggle for Survival

“For centuries, humans have failed the North Atlantic right whale — first through near-eradication from whaling and, more recently, through narratives that downplay the risk of offshore wind projects,” said lead researcher and Save LBI board member Denise Boccia.

“The National Marine Fisheries Service and BOEM have approved projects based on flawed and unsupported assumptions that significantly underestimate impacts, while major environmental organizations that protest similar impacts from oil and gas development remain silent or supportive, apparently mistakenly believing offshore wind offers discernible climate benefits. It does not,” Boccia continued. “University researchers who once voiced concern now appear content to pursue grant-funded projects. As a result, the responsibility to act falls to us, and to other groups and people who care about the many resources and natural treasures the ocean has to offer — including the endangered North Atlantic right whale.”

“Save LBI believes its petition provides a sensible approach to protecting the right whale from extinction, while restricting wind turbines from places where they obviously do not belong. Because the proposed migration corridor is relatively close to shore, the turbine prohibitions would also protect shore tourism industries, and avoid interference with our land-based air-defense radar systems. If we as a society want to save the North Atlantic right whale species from extinction, the migratory critical habitat designation is crucial,” Stern concluded.

“Readers are encouraged to express their support for the NARW migratory corridor petition to The White House, the Department of Commerce, and Department of the Interior.” Contact information is listed below.

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington, DC 20500

whitehouse.gov/contact

Douglas Burgum, Secretary**[U.S. Department of the Interior](#)**

1849 C Street, NW, MS-4106

Washington D.C. 20240

(202) 208-3100

[x.com/interior](https://twitter.com/interior)

facebook.com/USInterior

Email: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

Howard Lutnick, Secretary**[U.S. Department of Commerce](#)**

1401 Constitution Ave, NW

Washington D.C. 20230

[x.com/commercegov](https://twitter.com/commercegov)

facebook.com/Commercegov/

Email: PublicAffairs@doc.gov

About Save LBI

Save Long Beach Island (Save LBI) is an organization of citizens and businesses on and off the Island working together to protect the ocean and Long Beach Island and neighboring communities from the destructive impact of the Atlantic Shores project and potentially other offshore wind projects. As a not-for-profit, non-partisan entity, we do not endorse any political candidates but vigorously pursue policies and actions that protect the Island and New Jersey communities. The organization is led by Beach Haven resident Bob Stern, a Ph.D. engineer with experience in environmental law who previously managed the U.S. Department of Energy's office overseeing environment protection related to energy programs and projects. Visit SaveLBI.org and join the fight to save the North Atlantic right whale.

###