

8 Myths vs. Facts

Much mis-information and half-truths are being communicated regarding the massive windfarm planned for the entire coast off LBI. Following is a summary of the recurring ‘myths’ being propagated by Atlantic Shores (the company planning to build and operate the windfarm) and our corresponding facts. See the Real Story caption in this website for details. You be the judge...

Myth 1:	Myth 2:	Myth 3:	Myth 4:
<p>The wind turbines off the coast of LBI will be barely and rarely visible(only on “clear” days which only occur 20 percent of the time in the summer)</p> <p>The Facts: Unless the physics of straight line light transmission and simple geometry have changed recently, the several hundred wind turbines planned for our waters will be clearly visible from our beaches SITED ANYWHERE IN THE PROJECT AREA, and ALMOST ALL THE TIME. That is based on geometry and also on a BOEM study for NY of comparable visual scenarios that concluded the turbines would have a ‘dominant’ visual impact, meaning you cant shut them out. These newer turbines are 850 feet high, as tall as the Eiffel tower. Any boater can tell you that can still see the 160 foot water towers at 18 miles. These will be installed starting at 9 miles off the southern end of LBI and 10 miles off our northern end and go out to 20 miles. Even at 20 miles a substantial part of the towers and blades will be visible. To suggest otherwise is nonsense. These turbines will look like a ‘wall’ of industrial structures permanently marring the beautiful view from our beaches. In fact, this would be the most visible modern (using the larger 12 megawatt and higher power turbines)- offshore wind project in the entire world.</p>	<p>Visible offshore wind turbines will not hurt shore economies and actually will be a tourist attraction.</p> <p>The Facts: Your own instincts will tell you this is nonsense, and that is supported by research conducted by two universities in the US. A study by North Carolina State University found that 54 percent of those who previously rented oceanfront or ocean view properties would not return to those properties if turbines were in view, even if a significant discount was offered in the rental price. Another study by the University of Delaware -- which was actually sponsored by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the agency that oversees offshore wind development -- shows that for comparable visual impact situations to us, 19 percent less visits to the shore would occur if turbines were visible from our beaches. Another Study by Global Insight, Inc. shows significant losses in shore property values. While the wind project off Block Island is often used as an example to allay concerns about economic impact, that project consists of only five smaller turbines which is nothing compared to the hundreds of large turbines LBI will be facing (literally).</p>	<p>Offshore wind will be a boon to the economy and create “thousands” of jobs.</p> <p>The Facts: Many of the jobs from offshore wind are taken by workers in Europe where the turbines are manufactured or by overseas workers who will come here to assemble them, and by out-of-state suppliers. Job creation estimates from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Strategic plan show 289 to 859 direct and indirect jobs created from this 1,510-megawatt project. Recently BPU increased that to 2025. But the project also raises electric rates and problems for NJ businesses. Data from a study by Beacon Hill Associates would put those job losses at 3,046 which would offset even BPU’s higher estimate of new jobs. So, the new jobs promised from the project is suspect to begin with and doesn’t paint the full picture. In addition, there will be significant losses in property values, shore tourism revenues and associated local jobs with local businesses</p>	<p>Wind farms in Europe are highly successful and have not impacted tourism or property values.</p> <p>The Facts: It is true that the modern wind farms overseas have not negatively impacted tourism or property values. This is because of local concerns they are located much farther out from shorelines and cannot be seen from their beaches. In addition, some problems are also cropping up with European offshore wind turbines. For example, new research has shown that turbine performance over the last decade has degraded rapidly over time, at about 4.5 percent per year, especially for the newer and larger wind turbines. This means reduced energy output, higher operating costs and reduced lifetimes. Another study has shown that the likelihood of major outages, lasting at least one month, has increased by at least 10 percent per year.</p>

Myth 5:	Myth 6:	Myth 7:	Myth 8:
<p>The federal agency, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) conducts thorough environmental analyses prior to leasing an offshore site.</p> <p>The Facts: The BOEM completed a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) back in 2007 which only reviewed different sources of energy – offshore wind vs. coal vs. natural gas -- in a generic, not area-specific sense. For a specific lease area sale, they conduct an environmental assessment on environmentally insignificant site survey activities, such as wind speeds and sub-seabed composition surveys. So, to be clear, there has been no environmental assessment of the impact of the installation and operation of wind turbines on visible impact or on the undersea environment off the coast of LBI, including fish and marine life, as well as commercial and recreational fishing. BOEM defers an environmental (EIS) Impact statement on their proposed wind project until much later but by then pretty everything important is decided (See Myth/Fact 7). At no point in their process do they conduct an environmental review of alternative wind energy locations with public input, which is the most important decision to make.</p>	<p>There is only one location off the coast of LBI that has been approved by the federal government for a wind farm.</p> <p>The Facts: The BOEM says they have not approved the current lease area for a windfarm, only to survey it. There's another area lying further off LBI called the Hudson South call area. It has been screened by the BOEM for all relevant wind energy factors, including visible impact, navigation, fishing conflicts, energy potential and cost of development, recommended by them for wind energy development, and they are proceeding to lease it. With 6890 megawatts of power there and 2248 megawatts coming from the Ocean Wind project, the current area off LBI is not even needed to meet the State's goal of 7500 megawatts. Turbine placement in Hudson South would avoid the visible impact problems facing the island. The current area could be used to transmit all that power to shore. It is incomprehensible why this sensible approach is not even being considered by BOEM in the upcoming EIS. Our coalition submitted a detailed proposal to the BOEM to do that and it was rejected.</p>	<p>The BOEM will do an EIS on the project, so there is ample time to make changes to the project.</p> <p>The Facts: Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) are supposed to be about choice and alternatives for federal agencies to consider in the hope they will select an option that does less environmental harm. The BOEM will now do a full EIS on the project with opportunity for public comment seemingly as an opportunity to address concerns. However, it has structured its decision-making process to render that EIS almost a meaningless exercise. For this EIS, all the key factors are already decided. The location of the project was decided back in 2010 by a State-led task force of federal and state employees with no general public input and no consideration of visible turbine impact. There will be no alternate locations considered in the EIS despite our requests. The size and number of turbines was determined by a recent BPU decision. The spacing of the turbines is determined by engineering practice. So, while the EIS will allow the public the opportunity to finally comment, there isn't much left to comment about or to change.</p>	<p>Aside from its closeness to shore this is a good site for wind turbines.</p> <p>The Facts: This project location has other fatal flaws as well. The underwater noise from the operation of the new very large turbines, especially the gearbox type selected by Atlantic Shores, will have significant adverse impacts on endangered species. The critically endangered North Atlantic right whale's migratory path extends about a mile within the outer 20-mile project boundary. Endangered fin and humpback whales frequent 1.5 miles into the inner 10-mile boundary. An inner and outer turbine exclusion zone of 4 miles is needed to allow the underwater noise level at the turbine to decrease to the level established by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration that will not disrupt the whale's behavior. Since the project area goes from 10 to 20 miles, with these exclusion zones, there is no place at all for wind turbines that will not jeopardize these species. In addition, the piping plover which nests in Holgate and Barnegat Light must cross the project area to get there with the potential for a substantial number of fatalities. Add in the visible impact and you would have a hard time finding a worse site for huge wind turbines. See details under the caption, The Real Story.</p>

Conclusions; With the same inner turbine exclusion zone of 7.3 miles given to NY to reduce visible impact, or the 5.5-mile inner exclusion zone for the fin and humpback whales, and an outer exclusion zone of 5 miles for the right whale, there is no place for wind turbines in this project area. The BOEM should apply some common sense here, redirect this effort, place turbines farther out in the Hudson South area and use the current lease area for transmitting that power to shore.