



August 31, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer,

The undersigned organizations represent a diverse group of voices, covering project developers, service and supply companies, NGOs and other advocates for wind energy. As longtime supporters of the industry, we know that one key benefit provided by wind projects on the outer continental shelf is its potential to raise billions of dollars in funds for the federal government as the Department of Interior holds lease auctions. While we have already seen this potential in the waters off New England— which led to what the Department referred to as a “bonanza”<sup>1</sup> for taxpayers—and expect to see further significant funds from leasing off New York and New Jersey, the fact remains that Congress alone can act to fully realize this opportunity. We recommend including a provision in reconciliation that allows for leasing of offshore wind in all federal waters, including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to unlock the domestic potential of offshore wind.

Offshore wind provides a generational opportunity for renewable energy development. As Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland has stated “The demand for offshore wind energy has never been greater. Recent technological advances, falling costs, and tremendous economic potential make offshore wind a promising avenue for diversifying our national energy portfolio, creating good-paying union jobs, and tackling climate change...”<sup>2</sup> While much of the national focus has been on the prospects for “first-mover” projects in the northeastern United States, we also know that the south east has great promise for offshore wind. For example, a sweeping Wood Mackenzie study last year stated that the Carolinas alone could see nearly \$45 billion in capital investment and over 37,000 jobs supported annually over the next decade from offshore wind.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/bidding-bonanza-trump-administration-smashes-record-offshore-wind-auction-405-million>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-highlights-tremendous-offshore-wind-opportunities-virginia-governor>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.noia.org/offshore-energy-industry-releases-economic-impact-study-new-federal-offshore-wind-lease-auctions/>

However, there is a cloud over this energy—and revenue—potential. In the closing months of the Trump Administration, vast swaths of acreage were withdrawn for a decade from future federal energy leasing, starting in North Carolina and reaching down around Florida and into the eastern Gulf of Mexico. This is despite strong support from the region, particularly in the key areas off the coast of North Carolina where the Governor<sup>4</sup> and much of the Congressional delegation<sup>5</sup> support offshore wind.

Consideration of the underlying concept of re-opening these waters to possible offshore wind leasing is already well-underway. A bill to lift the moratorium on offshore wind, known as The *Restoring Offshore Wind Opportunities Act* (H.R. 2635), has been reviewed by the House Natural Resources Committee and has already been voted into Chairman Raul Grijalva's Oceans-Based Climate Solutions Act (H.R. 3764). What remains is to include leasing of these waters in the reconciliation-based infrastructure package, unlocking revenues for the federal government along with the opportunity for renewable energy that offshore wind can provide to the millions of Americans living along our southeastern coastline.

Given the opportunity, this industry will provide reliable and affordable energy through a strong pipeline of offshore wind projects, and it will create jobs from New England to the Gulf Coast, from the Pacific to the Hudson Valley. It can also help fund other federal priorities by bringing in much-needed funds to the Treasury. To do so, we need Congress to act.

Respectfully,



Erik Milito  
President  
National Ocean Industries  
Association



Heather Zichal  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Clean Power  
Association



Brad Sewell  
Director, Oceans Division  
Natural Resources Defense  
Council

CC:

Representative Paul Tonko

Representative Deborah Ross

Chairman Joe Manchin and Ranking Member John Barrasso, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Raul Grijalva and Ranking Member Bruce Westerman, House Natural Resources Committee

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<sup>4</sup> <https://governor.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2021/06/09/governor-cooper-commits-offshore-wind-power-north-carolina-creates-jobs-transitioning-clean-energy>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ross.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/ross.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/NC%20Delegation%20Letter%20to%20BOEM%204.8.21.pdf>