From: donotreply@state.de.us (MailBox Resources)
To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources); john.h.irwin@gmail.com
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Comments on Docket #2024-P-MULTI-0007 -- US Wind Project

Name: John Irwin
Phone: 3023771275
Email Address: john.h.irwin@gmail.com
Organization: Sierra Club, Delaware Chapter Climate and Energy Committee

Comments:
I'm writing to support the US Wind landfall project. Landfall and connection to the grid can be made safely and without much impact. One of the ways they'll do that is by using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) to send the cables 60' beneath the beach and dune, without making any contact with those critical ecosystems. They'll also use HDD to send the cables under the wetlands areas on the east and west coasts of Indian River Bay, again, avoiding contact with those important areas. Burying the cables with HDD and going this deep will also prevent them from becoming unburied through storms and wave activity along the coast. US Wind will use a low impact trenching method to bury the cables six feet deep through the middle section of Indian River Bay. The company has identified a path that has very low bay bottom movement (i.e. avoiding the more dynamic sections of the bay) so that the cables have extremely low risk of becoming unburied there either. The trenching method itself will cause some sedimentation, but about three quarters of the suspended sediment will settle within a couple hours, and nearly all will settle within 24 hours. US Wind has completed extensive sediment transport modeling to ensure that this will not pose a risk to bay wildlife during the construction period. The work will be done outside of critical spawning and migratory periods for bay wildlife such as horseshoe crabs and flounder to ensure that it does not interfere with the lifecycles of these creatures. For those who worry that running cables under the beach and dune would pose a risk to beachgoers, the cables will be insulated, sheathed, armored, and wrapped. Because of all the armoring (it creates a Faraday box), the cables DO NOT emit electric fields, only weak magnetic fields that create a weak, induced electromagnetic field (EMF). If you were within a couple feet of the cable, you would experience a 10-20 milligauss EMF emission. By comparison, you get 20 milligauss EMF emissions the whole time you're sitting in front of your PC. You get over 100 milligauss EMFs anytime you walk within 50 feet of an overhead electric line, and1,000 milligauss when you use a hair dryer. By burying the cables 60' beneath the beach, anyone using that area will receive zero emissions. Similarly, pelagic bay species will rarely be near any low level EMFs from the buried cables. Benthic animals that live in the bay bottom will only experience EMFs when they're within a couple meters of the buried cables, and will only receive 10-20 milligauss when they're within a couple meters. Extensive lab testing where numerous species are exposed to 10,000 – 25,000 milligauss levels have shown no effects on behavior or health. No In Situ studies of species expose to HVAC submarine cables (like the ones US Wind will be using) have shown any changes to behavior. The bottom line is that US Wind can install and operate submarine cables through the Indian River Bay with minimal impacts to people and wildlife, and be enabling clean energy, this work will reduce the air pollution that poses a much bigger threat to all local species.