

Proposed US Wind, Inc. Project
Docket #2024-P-MULTI-0007

Comments by
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The following comments were written after reviewing all materials submitted by US Wind, all documents referenced by US Wind that are relevant to Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic region, and all comments submitted to date that apply to the DNREC permits and approvals being sought by US Wind that are of a technical nature (not legal or procedural).

On June 5, 2024, I attended the Information Session offered by DNREC, where staff responsible for the various permits and approvals were present to provide information about their programs, explain what US Wind is proposing relative to their regulatory responsibilities, and answer any questions. US Wind was also represented at the Session. Additionally, US Wind's Mike Dunmyer was invited to give a presentation to our homeowners association. In order to provide unbiased information and answer questions, Kathryn Lienhard, a Delaware Sea Grant researcher who works with local governments on offshore wind issues, also attended the June 28, 2024 homeowners association event. Approximately 30 residents were in attendance.

My formal education and work experiences give me the bases for a thorough and in-depth analysis of the data and information presented by US Wind. I have a BS Degree in Zoology with a Fisheries Emphasis and an MS Degree in Marine Science with a minor in Statistics, both from North Carolina State University. I have worked in and been responsible for programs applicable to the coastal zones of North Carolina, New York State, Florida, and Delaware. Those work experiences involved the collection and analysis of data, conducting literature searches, assessing environmental impacts, writing reports, developing recommendations, and promulgating regulations to implement those recommendations.

My most recent work experience was with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). In 1989, I came to Delaware after working for the Florida Department of Natural Resources. I was responsible for the Inland Bays Estuary Program, which, after many years of data collection, analysis, committee work, citizen and agency collaboration, public input, and the development of environmental and conservation recommendations, resulted in a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). DNREC, many other federal, state, and local agencies, and the Center for the Inland Bays continue to implement those recommendations today.

I was promoted and my responsibilities expanded to include water quality programs (Water Quality Standards, Total Maximum Daily Loads, Shellfish, Recreational Waters), wetlands assessments, fish consumption advisories, and involvement in numerous watershed programs including the Chesapeake Bay Program. The last major project with which I was integrally involved was a comprehensive assessment of the then-proposed City of Rehoboth Beach Ocean

Outfall. It was one of the first projects that involved a joint permitting process such that several DNREC regulatory programs could conduct a comprehensive review of treated wastewater disposal alternatives and, ultimately, the alternative chosen by the City (the ocean outfall). The potential environmental impacts of the ocean outfall project and necessary DNREC permits and approvals are very similar to the proposed US Wind project. I retired in 2017 after working for the Department for 28 years.

My wife and I often surf fish or spend the day swimming or walking on a Delaware State Park beach. We have decades of beachfront observations to draw upon. We are very sensitive to potential impacts to water quality, habitat, fishing success, beach access, and aesthetics.

In August 2023, my wife and I moved to a community just outside of Lewes. So we are very much familiar with the increased demand for electricity and many other products and services in Delaware's coastal areas. We are also aware of the increasing demand for electricity for Information Technology services, especially Artificial Intelligence. If we do not meet these demands with additional sources of electricity, the cost of power will increase for those of us who are already faced with increased expenses for many other products and services, thereby creating additional inflationary pressures.

To the extent practicable, this increased demand for electricity should be met by new wind and solar projects. One of my first jobs after receiving my undergraduate degree was assessing the impacts of the nuclear power plant in Southport, NC. So I learned a great deal about nuclear power generation and environmental and safety concerns. I am supportive of nuclear power, but how many of us want to live near a nuclear power plant? And then there is the issue of what to do with spent nuclear fuel. Likewise, additional power plants powered by fossil fuels will meet with opposition due to concerns for air pollution, noise, public safety, and the impacts to the aesthetics of nearby neighborhoods.

US Wind, Inc., proposes to develop a commercial-scale, offshore wind energy project in the Lease Area known as Lease OCS-A 0490 offshore of Maryland. The proposed project is comprised of up to 121 wind turbine generators, up to four offshore substations, up to four offshore/onshore export cables, and one meteorological tower, in a gridded array pattern distributed across the Lease Area. Portions of the proposed export cables are located under state-regulated subaqueous lands in the Atlantic Ocean and wetlands and subaqueous lands in the Indian River Bay. The offshore/onshore export cables are proposed to land at the Delaware Seashore State Park 3R's Beach and to interconnect into a proposed substation to be constructed on tax parcel 233-2.00-2.01 adjacent to the Indian River Power Plant in Sussex County, Delaware.

Based upon my review of all materials submitted by US Wind, all documents referenced by US Wind that are relevant to Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic region, and all comments submitted to date that apply to the DNREC permits and approvals being sought by US Wind that are of a technical nature (not legal or procedural), I offer the following comments:

1. Aesthetically, the turbines will appeal to beachgoers and boaters, add to the many features that can be viewed (water, waves, porpoises, birds, vessels, jetties, etc.) and will benefit tourism and Delaware's economy. While the movement of turbines is fascinating and relaxing, they will be so far offshore that beachgoers will need binoculars to fully view them.
2. The support structures of turbines will significantly enhance recreational fishing opportunities. US Wind will essentially be creating artificial fishing reefs at no cost to taxpayers. Charter boat captains and recreational boaters from Delaware will have access to the turbines located off Maryland's coast. Recreational fisherpersons stimulate Delaware's economy via the purchase of boats, fuel, fishing gear, bait, and local accommodations.
3. US Wind has adequately addressed potential impacts and proposed protections for birds, turtles, marine mammals, and other aquatic life.
4. The beach, dunes, wetlands, subaqueous lands, and water quality impacts identified, which will be addressed by DNREC permits, will be minimal and temporary.
5. The impacts to the 3R's beach, dunes and parking lot are minimal and temporary. Manhole covers planned for the parking lot will not detract from the appearance or use of the parking lot and will likely be frequently covered by sand.

In summary, I fully support the issuance of the necessary DNREC permits for the US Wind project. Additionally, I support the development of new wind and solar projects to meet increasing demand for electricity. Further, evaluation of the US Wind project has given Delaware citizens and government agencies valuable experience that will be used to consider wind farms off the Delaware coast and to identify suitable locations where cables can be brought ashore.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Respectfully submitted,
John W. Schneider, Sr