



# SIERRA CLUB

## DELAWARE CHAPTER

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December 14, 2017

TO: Tom Noyes

The Sierra Club supports offshore wind (OSW) as a resource that can generate much of the electricity needed across the nation without adding substantially to the levels of greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and NO<sub>2</sub>. Along the Atlantic Coast, an integrated system of offshore wind farms could reliably supply electricity to a large portion of homes in the coastal states. Development of this resource would bring far more jobs to this area than allowing offshore drilling for oil and gas and would result in far less damage to the marine ecosystem.

The Sierra Club of Delaware strongly supports the views that we, as a state, should be investing in offshore wind and that early action is most likely to bring optimum economic growth in terms of manufacturing, installation and maintenance jobs. Delaware could provide excellent locations for assembly of offshore turbines and manufacture of some components. In addition, the University of Delaware's long involvement with research on wind power and the extensive multidisciplinary work that has come out of the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment should make Delaware an attractive hub for Atlantic Coast offshore wind development. Finally, the high degree of willingness of Delawareans living along the coast to accept offshore wind turbines<sup>1</sup> is an important factor for investors to consider.

With Maryland already considering two major offshore facilities, including one that would be constructed directly off Delaware's coast,<sup>2</sup> we need to move quickly to ensure that Delawareans get a fair chance at both developing offshore wind and buying the power that is generated off our coast. Willett Kempton makes a good point in that it would be better to lock in a plan for a substantial project to be begun in the early 2020s than to try now to add just a few turbines to a nearby project.<sup>3</sup>

While it is currently difficult to make OSW directly competitive in price with electricity generated from natural gas, we expect this situation to change. The cost of manufacture and installation of turbines, already dropping, could be lowered more by adoption of standardized equipment<sup>4</sup>. There is also good reason to believe that prices for natural gas will rise in the near future as more of the gas produced in the U.S. is piped to our coasts for

shipment overseas, where much higher prices prevail. For Delaware itself, becoming a net contributor to the electrical grid could also lower rates.

The Sierra Club of Delaware also supports extending our RPS goals, which currently are in place only until 2025. Considering Delaware's serious exposure to land loss and storm damage in coming decades, the possibility of increasing damage to both the Delaware and Chesapeake watersheds from continued hydraulic fracturing and waste disposal in Pennsylvania, and the substantively higher RPS goals for many of our neighbors, we believe that Delaware should adopt an aggressive goal of at least 90 percent renewable energy by 2050. This would most likely entail a goal of 40-50 percent for 2030.

Sincerely,

Coralie Pryde  
Conservation Chair, Sierra Club of Delaware

## REFERENCES

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1. <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/energy/Documents/Offshore%20Wind%20Working%20Group/Briefing%20Materials/OWWG-Kempton-Memo%20Dec%206%202017.pdf>
  2. <http://www.capegazette.com/article/wind-farm-delaware-benefit-maryland/134657>
  3. <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/energy/Documents/Offshore%20Wind%20Working%20Group/Briefing%20Materials/OWWG-Kempton-Memo%20Dec%206%202017.pdf>
  4. <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/energy/Documents/Offshore%20Wind%20Working%20Group/Briefing%20Materials/Industrializing-Offshore-Wind-Power-DRAFT-27Sep2017-2-.pdf>