

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Elizabeth Klein
Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Meredith A. Berger
Assistant Secretary for Energy, Installations and
Environment
United States Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Vice Admiral Peter W. Gautier
Deputy Commandant for Operations
United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

The Honorable Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D.
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Director Klein, Assistant Secretary Berger, Vice Admiral Gautier, and Administrator Spinrad:

As Members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, we write to urge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Department of Defense (DOD), United States Coast Guard (USCG), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to work together to maximize the acreage available for offshore wind development in the Central Atlantic, and specifically off the coast of Maryland. We hope such collaboration will result in BOEM issuing final lease areas that increase the acreage of the Draft Wind Energy Areas (Draft WEAs) that BOEM announced on November 16, 2022.¹ These leasing areas would be instrumental in allowing Maryland to meet its decarbonization goals and create tens of thousands of good-paying clean energy jobs, as well as supporting the President's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind energy by 2030, and 15 GW of floating offshore wind by 2035.²

Offshore wind energy is a critical priority for our state. In the last decade, Maryland has enacted laws to become a leader in our fight for a clean energy future. From the Maryland Offshore Wind Energy Act of 2013, the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019, and the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, Maryland worked to encourage offshore wind energy generation to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets. In fact, Maryland has some of the most aggressive GHG emission reduction targets in the nation, which would reduce emissions by 60% (over 2006 level) by 2031 and reach net-zero emissions by 2045. The state has been able to set ambitious goals, and will need support from federal partners to deliver on these promises. We urge each

¹ See https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/images/draft_wea_primary_secondary3.jpg.

² See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/15/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-expand-u-s-offshore-wind-energy/>

agency to find ways to maximize offshore wind leases off the coast of Maryland to ensure we can meet our state and national decarbonization goals.

The offshore wind industry has already made significant economic investments to create the strong supply chains and trained workforces necessary to generate new clean power in the state. Maryland offshore wind developers, US Wind and Ørsted, have committed a combined \$340 million toward new manufacturing facilities to support their projects off the coast of Maryland. These projects will power over 640,000 Maryland homes, expand STEM education programs, develop a zero-emission offshore wind operations and maintenance port facility, and create a minimum of 10,000 jobs during the development, construction, and operating phases of the projects. The state has garnered national support for its budding offshore wind industry, and last August, the Maryland Department of Labor, in partnership with the developers and several labor unions, received over \$20 million from the Department of Commerce to implement an apprenticeship program and address exploding demand in the sector. Maryland will train thousands of workers to meet incredible demand from renewable energy related enterprises.

In order to meet our national offshore wind commitments, we'll need a strong development pipeline in place, including for workforce training, manufacturing, and construction. Unfortunately, this pipeline could be stunted if the existing leases off the coasts of Maryland and Delaware do not retain their maximum developable acreage and there are not sufficient opportunities for expansion in the Central Atlantic. We write to encourage all stakeholders, including BOEM, DOD, and USCG, to be mindful of how Maryland's energy, economic, and environmental priorities are directly supported by new and existing offshore wind lease areas in the Central Atlantic.

Given this massive opportunity for economic growth, we are concerned that BOEM has only identified eight draft WEAs in the Central Atlantic as candidates for offshore wind leasing, and that these areas could be reduced even further at future stages. Five of these areas—A, B1, B2, C, and D—are in shallow waters suitable for offshore wind turbines with fixed-bottom foundations that can be built using the factories currently planned in Maryland. Combined, these areas could sustain nine or more commercial-scale offshore wind leases. We ask that you work together to provide maximum acreage to allow developers to capture economies of scale in their projects, build a sustainable onshore supply chain, and meet Maryland's current and future clean energy commitments. Additionally, we urge you to prioritize the northernmost leasing areas, which can easily bring clean electricity to shore at coastal interconnection points. We also acknowledge the opportunity that floating offshore wind presents for Maryland's industries, and encourage BOEM to fully lease the draft WEAs in deep water to maximize *both* fixed-bottom and floating acreage.

We recognize that parts of these WEAs have existing use conflicts, including those managed by DOD, USCG, and NOAA, and we appreciate that maintaining national security, ensuring navigational safety, and managing our commercial fisheries are critically important priorities. At the same time, offshore wind energy provides a source of clean electricity that increases our

energy security, helps fight the climate crisis, and creates tens of thousands of good-paying jobs for American workers. While we understand that these latest maps do not yet include input from DOD, we urge BOEM to ensure that the final WEAs incorporate feedback from all relevant stakeholders to optimize shared use of the waters while supporting safe maritime transit.

We urge our federal partners to work with BOEM to expand the WEA and fully lease all applicable areas in the Central Atlantic. Cooperation and flexibility from BOEM, DOD, USCG, and NOAA to maximize offshore wind lease areas in the Central Atlantic could unlock more than 10,000 additional megawatts of clean energy for our region and tens of thousands of new jobs. It is essential to work together to achieve our offshore wind and climate goals while still preserving your respective Services' and agencies' mission-critical activities, and we stand ready to assist you in this task.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



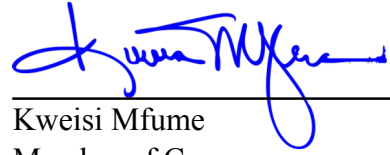
John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



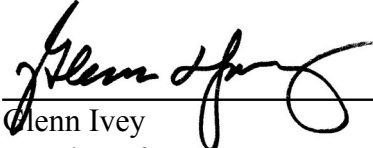
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