

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Energy Chairman Bobby L. Rush**

Hearing on “Offshore Wind, Onshore Benefits: Growing the Domestic Wind Energy Industry”

October 21, 2021

Good morning. I would like to thank you all for joining us today for this important hearing on the state of the offshore wind industry.

The US offshore wind industry is lagging behind the rest of the world — with Europe having just over 25 gigawatts and China with just over 7. The US — by comparison — has effectively zero.

That’s why I was so delighted when, earlier this year, President Biden announced a goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity by 2030, helping kickstart what I hope will be the start of an offshore wind revolution. According to an analysis by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 30 gigawatts of offshore wind have the potential to create 77,000 jobs by 2030 and would tee up the creation of over 135,000 jobs by 2050. We will see turbines in the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and perhaps even the Great Lakes close to my own home state of Illinois.

Additionally, at a time when US consumers are vulnerable to violent variations in fossil fuel prices, the allure of a consistent, affordable source of baseload electricity — produced right here at home by American workers — should be clear.

As a part of our broader efforts to Build Back Better, we need to ensure that we are making smart investments so that offshore wind lives up to its potential. These include investments in American shipbuilding, steel, and ports. The Biden Administration has announced that it will provide three billion dollars’ worth of loan guarantees to help direct investments to where they need to go.

And investments in offshore wind truly exemplify the Build Back Better promise. That same NREL study found that the construction and operating jobs created by the offshore wind industry would have a median pay higher than the current nationwide median wage. In other words, these are high-paying jobs.

They are also good, **union** jobs. As some of our witnesses today will attest, the sector has seen a good deal of success integrating organized labor into its plans. I was pleased that, last year, Orsted signed an agreement with the North America Building Trades Unions to transition construction workers into the offshore wind industry. Additionally, Vineyard Wind, which is slated to be the first commercial-scale offshore wind project in the country, recently signed a

October 21, 2021

Page 2

project labor agreement with the Southeastern Massachusetts Building Trades Council. I sincerely hope that these early steps create a standard for the industry as it grows and evolves.

While this is all very promising, it is critical that we remain on high alert to ensure that the offshore wind industry does **not** follow in the footsteps of so many other clean energy industries, which have disproportionately left Black and Brown workers — as well as women of all races — behind. The offshore wind industry cannot repeat those same mistakes, and I hope that we take this opportunity to do better.

With that said, I am looking forward to today's hearing and to a good discussion around the potential and promise of the offshore wind industry.

And with that, I would like to welcome my friend and colleague, the Ranking Member from the great state of Michigan, Mr. Upton, to make an opening statement.