

**Chairman Alan S. Lowenthal**  
**Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Field Hearing:**

***“Examining the Benefits and Potential Challenges for New Jersey’s Growing Offshore Wind Industry”***

**Wildwood, New Jersey**  
**September 16, 2019**

The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources will come to order.

Thank you all for being here today as we conduct this subcommittee field hearing to hear about the benefits and potential challenges of the offshore wind industry.

I want to thank Representative Van Drew for welcoming us to the great state of New Jersey and for all his help in making today’s hearing possible. It’s not often that we get to hold hearings at the beach so this is quite a treat.

Since this is an official Congressional hearing, I have some parliamentary housekeeping before we hear from our expert panelists.

Under Committee Rule 4(f), any oral opening statements at hearings are limited to the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member or their designees.

I ask unanimous consent that all other Members’ opening statements be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Subcommittee Clerk by 5:00 pm today. *[pause]* Hearing no objection, so ordered.

I also ask for unanimous consent for Congressman Van Drew to participate in this morning’s hearing. *[pause]* Hearing no objection, so ordered.

The Subcommittee is meeting today in Wildwood to hear testimony on the local benefits and impacts of the offshore wind industry for New Jersey.

As the subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources in the House of Representatives, we are charged with overseeing energy development on public lands and in federal waters.

These areas, which are managed and maintained on behalf of all Americans and provide a multitude of benefits, contain some of the sunniest, windiest, and most geologically active places in the country, if not the world. They are often ideal locations for solar, wind, and geothermal energy development.

Since January, this subcommittee has therefore been focused on responsibly expanding renewable energy and clean technologies that employ American workers, reduce harmful carbon pollution, and increase our nation's security and competitiveness. There is no doubt that a transition away from fossil fuels to zero-emission energy sources is essential if we are to leave a recognizable world for our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren, and beyond. Public lands and waters can and must play a more significant role in supporting our nation's clean energy transition and addressing the climate crisis.

Offshore wind development in federal waters provides an enormous opportunity to help our nation's shift to a clean energy economy, yet to date there is still not a single large-scale offshore wind farm in this country.

While the United States still lags behind most of Europe when it comes to offshore wind, we are well positioned for long-term success. In fact, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the offshore wind energy potential of the United States is nearly double the nation's current electricity use.

Think about that, even when taking into account technology limitations, environmental considerations, and areas that are off limits because of other ocean activities, offshore wind in this country has the potential to produce two times the amount of electricity that we are currently using today.

This is astounding. We cannot afford to let this clean energy resource go underdeveloped.

But it is also critically important to remember that construction and operations of offshore wind farms must be done safely and responsibly in order to protect other important values provided by our oceans, namely commercial and recreational fishing, military activities, and essential wildlife habitat.

From start to finish, development of offshore wind must be transparent, open to meaningful stakeholder engagement and creative thinking on ways to best avoid and mitigate potential impacts while still harnessing the full power of our exceptional offshore wind energy resources.

I fundamentally believe that offshore wind farms can successfully coexist alongside the many other stakeholders who rely on a healthy and sustainable ocean for their livelihood.

With thoughtful planning and use of the best available scientific data, we can work through potential challenges and grow this new clean energy industry for the benefit of both New Jersey and our entire nation.

Finding ways to balance the needs of all ocean stakeholders is a major theme of today's hearing and I look forward to hearing from our panelists of this subject.

With that, I recognize Representative Van Drew for short welcome remarks and to introduce our first panel of witnesses.