

**Prepared Testimony of Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo, New Jersey  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
US House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
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*Wildwoods Convention Center, 4501 Boardwalk, Wildwood*

- I'd like to thank the subcommittee for inviting me this morning. Thank you to the Chair (ALAN LOWENTHAL, D-CA.), and the Ranking Member (PAUL GOSAR, R-AZ).
- As you can imagine, one of my favorite topics of discussion is job creation, so I'm pleased to have this opportunity to address you today.
- I share Governor Murphy's belief that economic development and workforce development are two sides of the same coin.
- Now is the time to act.
- The preliminary employment data for July puts New Jersey's unemployment rate at 3.3 percent. This number is the lowest recorded monthly average since we began keeping track in 1976. New Jersey is now four tenths of one percent (0.4) below the national rate.

- While this is amazing news, and proof that our economy can be STRONGER even as it gets FAIRER, full employment is a challenge when you're about to start a whole new industry in the region that will employ approximately 36,000 workers.
- That's why we have been so busy collaborating with our partners at the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, Economic Development Authority, and Board of Public Utilities. We have started shaping policy and strengthening talent pipelines through our Industry Partnerships – so we are ready.
- The combination of a strong economy... a population who wants and needs to see change... and an administration willing to take bold action have created the perfect environment for the life-saving innovation needed to combat climate change.
- From electricians to zoologists to financial analysts, marketing specialists, marine engineers, and lawyers, there are nearly a hundred occupations that wind energy touches.

And, it's estimated that just one average-size windfarm in New Jersey could create 4,300 jobs.

- Living in a state with some of the best wind resources in the world, it would be irresponsible to not expand this reliable, tech-savvy, cost-effective energy source. Especially when leading coastal research institutions like Rutgers, Monmouth, and Stockton University, are here in our own backyard.
- One month ago today, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 79 establishing the Wind Innovation and New Development, or *WIND*, Institute. The WIND Institute has been charged with developing and implementing a plan to create a regional hub for New Jersey's rapidly growing offshore wind industry.
- The governor's vision for the WIND Institute will help bring together government, education, business, and nonprofit entities so we can coordinate a plan to bring this innovation workforce to fruition.
- We see the big picture. We know manufacturing in New Jersey is a strong sector, and our workers have the skills

and the know-how to help revolutionize this industry. We want to see more jobs... more growth... and more opportunities to better our workforce – and our planet.

- Over the past 5 years, New Jersey has added 13,000 manufacturing jobs, which reversed a decades-long decline.
- I would like to take a minute and talk about some of the ways we have been expanding workforce opportunities in New Jersey, beginning with apprenticeship, and how that fits in to our discussion today.
- At the top of our department's agenda is supporting businesses and workers with the best opportunities out there, which is why this administration has gone all-in on apprenticeship.
- Apprenticeship reduces employee turnover, and increases productivity.
- Apprenticeship builds a pipeline of skilled workers, and creates a built-in model for succession planning. And apprenticeship opens the door to federal and state funding

and resources, because we know that investing in a stronger, fairer economy is good for everyone.

- New Jersey has 8,021 Registered Apprentices who are active today, a 20 percent increase since Governor Murphy took office.
- There are currently 869 Registered Apprenticeship programs in the state, a 42 percent increase since the administration began, which further demonstrates the far-reaching capabilities of apprenticeship to train the state's future workforce to meet businesses' needs.
- These are not small numbers. This is amazing progress that is going to have a lasting impact on our workforce here in the New Jersey.
- The apprenticeship investments we are making today – which could have far-reaching impacts in the Offshore Wind sector -- are a part of building our state's workforce of tomorrow.

- We added programs for water treatment plant operators, dementia care professionals, and paramedics to the long list of careers this touches. Even groundskeepers!
- We also have multiple new Registered Apprenticeship programs at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory to train technicians who will help further fusion energy research in the state.
- The earn-while-you-learn model of apprenticeship has far-reaching capabilities across any industry trying to develop pipelines of talent, which is the key to New Jersey's status as an innovation leader.
- In the fields related to offshore wind -- laborers, electricians, engineers, and diesel mechanics -- this is a time-tested model that has proven to be highly successful.
- In the past 12 months alone, right here in Atlantic and Cape May counties, we have seen hundreds of job postings for the in-demand occupations that will be vital to this new industry.

- We have created an environment to solve major shared issues, including talent shortages...
- ...An environment to jointly assess and act on opportunities for growth
- ...A single table where businesses can work with public entities
- ...And an opportunity to share costs related to the plan and initiatives that will solve our needs
- If we want to see big change, it's going to take all of us working together, thinking outside of the box on how we can create new jobs, support this important industry, and all of the hardworking people we want to see flourish within it.
- As we develop a clearer vision of the workforce development opportunities associated with this new industry, our higher education and labor partners plan to establish a curriculum for trade schools and colleges so that students and workers of all ages and backgrounds will have access to customized trainings needed to succeed in the wind energy sector.

- We envision the WIND Institute serving as a regional resource for workforce development and training, tightly linked to other administration programs including the New Jersey Apprenticeship Network.
- Throughout these efforts, we will engage in targeted and prioritized outreach to ensure all communities benefit from the increased availability of high paying jobs, training programs, and clean, affordable energy.
- Thank you. I look forward to your questions.