



P.O. Box 74
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
Telephone: (609) 465-7181
Fax: (609) 465-5017
Email: vicki@cmchamber.com
www.capemaycountychamber.com

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Thank you Chairman Lowenthal and members of the committee for this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources hearing to “Examine the Benefits and Potential Challenges for New Jersey’s Growing Offshore Wind Industry. I am Vicki Clark, President and CEO of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce, representing over 800 businesses and organizations located in and or doing business at the most southern tip of New Jersey.

The Cape May County business community has great interest in today’s topic of discussion as the northern coast of Cape May County is the location for the first offshore wind project to be constructed by Orsted, referred to as the Atlantic City project, beginning in 2020. And, shortly after that project is developed, a project off the southern tip of the Cape May County peninsula is proposed to be constructed.

This offshore wind project not only provides the promise of creating a source of sustainable clean energy that will provide power to 500,000 New Jersey homes, but just as importantly, an economic stimulus of some 3000 jobs. These jobs are especially important as they are new jobs that are not connected to our region’s seasonal tourism industry and after the construction phase is complete will create a base of new sustainable employment for the foreseeable future.

For nearly 50 years we have fought the development of offshore oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean. As we look for alternatives to fossil fuel energy, offshore wind will provide sustainable, clean energy that will protect our oceans, bays, beaches and marine life for future generations to come. Along with the development of offshore wind however, we must make sure that this is done in step with – not competition to, our commercial and recreational fishing industries as well as the county’s \$6.6 billion tourism industry. Just as the wind turbines are now 15 miles off shore instead of the originally proposed 10 miles in order to alleviate certain concerns of the tourism industry, we must hear from the fishing industry and address their concerns as well. We believe that it is entirely possible and absolutely necessary for the offshore wind and fishing industries to co-exist in our ocean waters.

Commercial fishing represents the second largest industry in Cape May County with The Port of Cape May being the 3rd largest fishing seaport on the East Coast valued at over \$85 million (in 2017) bringing in some 40 million pounds of scallops, butterfish, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, surf clams, ocean quahog, lobster, herring, and monkfish. This historic and important industry as well recreational fishing must be considered and protected as the Offshore Wind industry is developed in the ocean waters.

The Cape May County Chamber supports having members of the fishing industry involved in discussions as offshore wind projects are designed and developed so that there is cohesive and supportive dialogue represented by all parties. Offshore Wind is critical to providing sustainable clean energy and reasonable assurances should be made in order that this new development in our ocean waters does not interrupt an already existing and thriving industry that provides jobs in the local community, supplies fish markets, restaurants, and canneries throughout the United States and around the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Vicki Clark
President

