

## Opening Statement

Chair Alan S. Lowenthal

Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Legislative Hearing

*“Building Back Better: Reducing Pollution and Creating Jobs Through Offshore Wind”*

April 20, 2021

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

Good morning, or good afternoon, depending on where you are, and welcome to the Subcommittee.

We are meeting today to hear testimony on three bills: Representative Keating’s Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act, Representative Tonko’s Restoring Offshore Wind Opportunities Act, and Resident Commissioner González-Colón’s Offshore Wind for Territories Act.

Under Committee Rule 4(f), any oral opening statements at hearings are limited to the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member or their designees. This will allow us to hear from our witnesses sooner and help Members keep to their schedules.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that all other Members’ opening statements be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Clerk by 5:00 pm today or the close of the hearing, whichever comes first; [PAUSE] hearing no objection, so ordered.

Without objection, the Chair may also declare a recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Without objection, the Member from Puerto Rico, Resident Commissioner González-Colón, and the Member from California, Representative Brownley, are authorized to question witnesses in today’s hearing.

As described in the notice, statements, documents, or motions must be submitted to the electronic repository at [HNRCdocs@mail.house.gov](mailto:HNRCdocs@mail.house.gov).

Additionally, please note that, as with in-person meetings, Members are responsible for their own microphones. Members can be muted by staff only to avoid inadvertent background noise.

Finally, Members or witnesses experiencing technical problems should inform committee staff immediately.

With that, I will begin my opening statement.

We're holding this hearing today at a historic time – this week, on the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, President Biden is convening leaders from all over the world to discuss the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action.

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. The science is overwhelmingly clear that the planet and our society are facing irreparable harm if we don't take action.

Thankfully, the United States is now back on its way to becoming a global climate leader. We are once again party to the Paris Climate Agreement and are charting a path forward to reducing greenhouse gas pollution here at home in a way that creates millions of new, high quality, good paying jobs across the entire country in a wide-range of industries.

One powerful tool in the toolbox is our still largely untapped offshore wind energy resources.

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. And looking to the future, even with more electric vehicles and greater electrification of buildings and the industrial sector, offshore wind could still provide around 90 percent of our anticipated electricity needs in 2050. This is a tremendous clean energy resource sitting just off nearly every single coastline, one that we have barely begun to tap.

But now thanks to the Biden Administration the United States is finally primed and ready for an offshore wind jobs and energy boom.

Last month, the Biden Administration made a historic announcement that will help us create good paying jobs in the offshore wind industry. The Administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 would mean electricity for 10 million homes and jobs for up to 80,000 people. It would also cut carbon dioxide emissions by 78 million metric tons. To put that in perspective, we would have to plant 1 billion trees and let them grow for ten years before seeing the same amount of emissions reduction.

At today's hearing, we will hear more about the Biden Administration's commitment to offshore wind and examine three pieces of legislation that will help unlock the full job creation potential of this new and growing industry.

Representative Keating's Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act will create a new program to help workers develop critically-needed skills to enter this rapidly growing industry. States, unions, institutes of higher education, and industry are already taking action to identify workforce training needs and develop offshore wind supply chains, but the federal government needs to do more to help them speed up these efforts.

Representative Tonko's legislation ends two Trump-era bans on offshore wind leasing in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic Ocean. Two weeks ago, seven members of the North Carolina delegation from both parties wrote the Department of the Interior asking for these bans to be lifted so their state could take advantage of all the benefits that come from offshore wind.

Unfortunately, the Interior Department does not have that ability. That's why the Restoring Offshore Wind Opportunities Act is necessary. It would provide North Carolina and other interested states the ability to fully harness the tremendous opportunities for offshore wind investment and jobs.

And finally we will be considering Resident Commissioner González-Colón's legislation to allow for potential offshore wind leasing in the US territories and insular areas. The bill takes a responsible approach by requiring careful study and consideration before any leasing takes place, and requires close consultations

with local governments to determine when and where offshore wind might be appropriate.

I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses, including from the new Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Amanda Lefton, in her first appearance before Congress. Thank you all for joining us.