

Questions for the Record - Mike Williams, BGA

Questions from Rep. McEachin (D-VA)

1. Mr. Williams, how can the Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act ensure that the benefits of the offshore wind industry reach communities in need of new job opportunities and economic development?

The Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act will be crucial here. The legislation prioritizes grants in economically distressed communities, displaced workers, and individuals with a barrier to employment. This will help ensure that good-paying jobs are created in the communities that need them the most.

By supporting a wide variety of strategies to encourage workforce development in the growing sector of offshore wind, the Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act sets the tone for high-quality, middle-class jobs in this expanding energy market. Through intentional efforts to target communities with limited access to these highly skilled trades jobs, OSW development can help create a ladder to the middle-class for disadvantaged communities.

Additionally, the coordinated, proactive planning made possible by a strong Project Labor Agreement is crucial. PLAs ensure that projects provide crucial benefits to local communities in terms of skills training, employment opportunities, and future workforce development; and ensure that the most productive and skilled craft labor is available to work on a project.

2. How will this legislation help build a more diverse offshore wind workforce?

Because of its focus on prioritizing grants in economically distressed communities, displaced workers, and individuals with a barrier to employment, the bill will help build a more diverse workforce and help ensure that good-paying jobs are created in the communities that need them the most.

3. Why is it important that the federal government provide funding for offshore wind workforce development? Why isn't this something that private companies can fund on their own?

Workforce development is already being funded by states, unions and private companies, but with the rapid growth of this industry, the federal government will need to provide funding as well. To get workers properly trained -- quickly -- training efforts would benefit from coordination and alignment with unions, private companies, states and the federal government (partnerships that this bill will help incentivize). Moreover, the benefits of a growing offshore wind industry and workforce will be far reaching, workforce development in this area is a good investment. Offshore wind won't just benefit the states on the coasts or abutting the Great Lakes, it will benefit us all—through economic growth in communities, less pollution driving climate change, and better jobs for workers not just in the industry, but also those making the components and materials needed to generate the energy.

Questions from Rep. Tonko (D-NY)

1. Mr. Williams, I firmly believe that as we create new, clean energy jobs, we must work hard to ensure they are good-paying and adhere to high labor standards. We need to make sure we have a workforce that has the skills necessary. How are your members partnering with industry to match union labor with the workforce requirements of the emerging offshore industry?

Unions, including UWUA, USW, UA, IBEW, the Painters and the Ironworkers have been actively working with companies, states, and other entities to support workforce development initiatives throughout the East Coast.

Suffolk Community College, the Utility Workers Union of America, the Long Island Federation of Labor AFL-CIO, the Building Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk County, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have partnered with Orsted to develop a national training center that would offer a specialized opportunity for not only the New York workforce but workforce up and down the east coast.

Additionally, labor unions recognize the tremendous job opportunity in offshore wind - supply chain, construction and O&M - and have become OSW advocates supporting large state-level legislation for OSW procurement and commitments.

This is also an area where a strong PLA is crucial. PLAs ensure that projects are completed on time and on budget, require that employees are properly trained, and encourage that public investment benefits local communities. In this way, PLAs benefit workers, contractors, communities, and taxpayers.

PLAs are particularly critical in these projects because they bring coordinated, proactive planning to complex projects; provide crucial benefits to local communities in terms of skills training, employment opportunities, and future workforce development; and ensure that the most productive and skilled craft labor is available to work on a project.

Additionally, joint efforts like the National OSW training center in NY provide a space for collaboration between unions and industry that result in effective, high skilled training.

2. How do we ensure that the benefits of the offshore wind industry reach communities in coastal states that are most in need of new job opportunities and economic development?

The Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act prioritizes grants to displaced workers, in economically distressed communities, and to individuals with a barrier to employment. This prioritization helps ensure that good-paying jobs are created in the communities that need them the most.

The Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act sets the tone for high-quality, middle-class jobs in this expanding energy market. Through intentional efforts to target communities with limited

access to these highly skilled trades jobs, OSW development can help create a ladder to the middle-class for disadvantaged communities.

Additionally, the coordinated, proactive planning made possible by a strong Project Labor Agreement will ensure that projects provide crucial benefits to local communities in terms of skills training, employment opportunities, and future workforce development; and ensure that the most productive and skilled craft labor is available to work on a project.

Finally, offshore wind is concentrated on the coasts, and many coastal communities are reliant on one or sometimes two different economic sectors for their health, for example areas that rely on tourism or fishing. Offshore wind projects can help diversify those economies to add clean energy generation to their mix. That means not just the jobs created during construction, but long-term jobs in supply chain development and for operating and maintaining offshore wind turbines. This bill will ensure geographic diversity while also clearly benefiting states where offshore wind development is concentrated.