



Inside Energy

Published by the Caesar Rodney Institute
Center for Energy Competitiveness

RE: Offshore Wind Project Could Destroy our Beach Economy

DATE : 10/17/2019

David T. Stevenson, Director

Tourists visit eastern Sussex County for the ocean, and a pristine view to the horizon is critical to beach enjoyment. Two companies have leases in federal waters extending all the way from the Ocean City inlet to north Rehoboth to build industrial offshore wind projects using wind turbines as large as the Chrysler Building in Manhattan. When shown visualizations of what the view will be, over a third of tourists say they would go elsewhere, and worse, the negative responses rise to almost half when nighttime views show multitudes of flashing red airplane warning lights. This could destroy the beach economy.

The only leverage Delaware beach towns have to stop these projects is to follow Ocean City's lead and deny approval to bring electric transmission cables onshore. The Delaware state parks division is weeks away from signing an agreement to bring the cable ashore at Fenwick Island State Park in exchange for park improvements. The Caesar Rodney Institute has asked the Governor to delay this decision, and has advised our beach communities to hold hearings, to receive public comment, and to vote to accept or reject these offshore wind projects.

We hope our Delaware politicians, including the federal delegation, will work to honor the will of our beach towns. The Delaware Tourism Office reports the tourism industry adds \$3 billion a year to our economy, adding \$470 million in taxes and fees, and supporting over 41,000 direct jobs.

The projects exist because of federal decisions to offer leases, and Maryland's state government decisions to offer the offshore wind companies a guarantee of \$8 billion in revenue backed up by Maryland electric customers. During the approval process, the Maryland Public Service Commission consultant concluded the offshore projects would simply replace onshore wind projects which cost one-third as much. Ocean City, MD opposes the state plan out of concern for lost tourism from the negative impacts of the view of turbines off the coast.

Final federal approval rests on completing an environmental impact study on fish and birds. Onshore wind projects are killing over a million birds and bats, including eagles, and endangered species. In New England the fishing industry opposes offshore wind.