

U.S. NEWS

Gusts of activity underway by friends and foes of offshore wind energy projects



BY WAYNE PARRY

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LONG BEACH TOWNSHIP, N.J. (AP) — Government supporters of offshore wind energy projects in New Jersey and New York are trading blows with opponents in some shore towns who say many vacationers and local residents don't want to see turbines filling the ocean horizon.

Eight Jersey Shore beach towns wrote to state utility regulators Wednesday, saying one wind farm proposal

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Shore towns spanning much of New Jersey's 127-mile coastline wrote to the state's Board of Public Utilities, saying the proposed Atlantic Shores wind farm will be costlier than originally proposed, particularly if the developers are allowed to re-bid it.

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An economic analysis sent by Long Beach Township, Beach Haven, Ship Bottom, Barnegat Light, Surf City, Harvey Cedars, Brigantine and Ventnor predicts reduced visitation to the Jersey Shore by people who don't want to see windmills on the horizon could cost Ocean County alone more than \$668 million in economic losses.

“The Atlantic Shores project will devastate the economies of the shore municipalities by deterring visitors and eliminating thousands of jobs,” said James Mancini, mayor of Long Beach Township on Long Beach Island. “It is imperative that any offshore wind projects are placed far enough out to avoid these drastic impacts, which adversely affect not only the shore municipalities’ residents, visitors, and businesses, but all of New Jersey’s residents.”

The towns also said allowing the project owners to re-bid would increase additional costs to ratepayers to \$10 billion, up from \$3.7 billion.

Atlantic Shores did not respond to a message seeking comment Thursday.

The utilities board said “there will be a limited opportunity” for developers to seek to re-bid their projects. “We are always working to ensure the most cost-effective outcomes for New Jersey ratepayers,” it said in a statement.

The New Jersey Offshore Wind Alliance said the law firm that wrote to New Jersey regulators is “engaged in misguided litigation against offshore wind development,” and that an operating wind farm off Block Island, Rhode Island, proves that offshore wind farms can coexist with tourism and recreational fisheries.

Atlantic Shores would have 157 turbines and [would be located 8.7 miles from shore](#), among the closest projects proposed for the state’s shoreline. It is a partnership between Shell New Energies US LLC, and EDF-RE Offshore Development, LLC.

It is one of three offshore wind projects currently pending in New Jersey. The state [Board of Public Utilities in January chose](#) Attentive Energy LLC and Leading Light Wind LLC to build offshore wind projects.

Also on Wednesday, U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement finalized new regulations for offshore wind projects intended to save the industry \$1.9 billion over the next 20 years. It would streamline some processes, eliminate what the agencies called duplicative requirements and allow money for eventual decommissioning work to be put up incrementally instead of all at once at the start of a project.

That same day, New York’s governor responded to the collapse of three offshore wind projects last week by issuing requests for proposals and information regarding supply chains and logistics for offshore wind projects. That followed the state canceling three preliminarily approved offshore wind projects after failing to reach final agreements with any of them.