

Offshore Wind Advances as Opponents Keep Pressure On

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By Gina G. Scala

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LEARNING CURVE: Long Beach Township Mayor Joseph Mancini addresses attendees during Save LBI rally at Bayview Park July 1. (Photo by Jack Reynolds)

Even as a local grassroots organization continues its fight against wind turbines off the coast, Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind is moving ahead with its plans by tapping a New Jersey-based company to lead its substation expansion program for its first offshore wind project.

“Atlantic Shores is thrilled to partner with Riggs Distler on making critical near-term investments at the Cardiff substation that support the local supply chain and create even more great-paying union jobs in Atlantic County” said Joris Veldhoven, chief executive officer of Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind. “These important infrastructure upgrades will enable us to bring safe, reliable, renewable power from New Jersey’s first offshore wind project onto the electric grid.”



Congressman Jeff Van Drew speaks at the True Impact of Offshore Wind Turbines event.

Headquartered in Cherry Hill, Riggs Distler, a Centuri company, is one of the largest unionized utility, mechanical, and electrical contractors in the nation. It has more than a century of local market experience and a growing portfolio of work in clean energy technologies.

Atlantic Shores Project 1 will deliver 1,510 megawatts of clean energy to the state of New Jersey. The project is expected to generate enough safe, reliable, renewable power to serve more than 700,000 homes while contributing nearly \$2 billion to the state’s economy.

The contract scope includes the engineering, procurement, construction and installation of all new electrical equipment for an expansion of the 230 kV Cardiff Substation in Egg Harbor Township.

The expansion work includes site preparation and the construction of a new electrical enclosure and control building to house a 230kV gas insulated switchgear (GIS) with associated controls. Other improvements include outdoor electrical equipment, 230 kV duct banks, cable trenches, ancillary/auxiliary equipment, and site fencing.

These necessary upgrades, identified by the regional transmission operator, will create the point of interconnection to bring safe, reliable, renewable power from Atlantic Shores Project 1 onto the local electric grid.



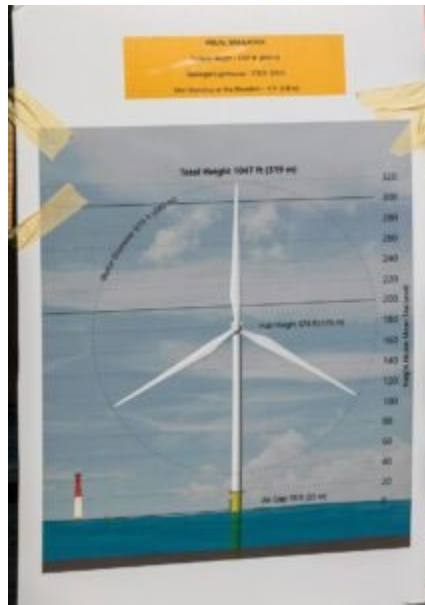
Members of the public park their own beach chairs, scattered across the parking lot to learn more.

“Riggs Distler is proud to support Atlantic Shores on this important infrastructure project connecting offshore wind energy to the grid in New Jersey. Along with our partners, Jingoli Power and Worley Engineering, our work is creating economic growth and job opportunities right here in our own backyard as we work to build a cleaner energy future,” said Steve Zemaitatis, Riggs Distler president and chief executive officer.

In the meantime, Save LBI, which hosted an event July 1 at Bayview Park in Brant Beach, continues to maintain that the Atlantic Shores project threatens the survival of the critically endangered North American right whale. With just 350 remaining, this species is already perilously close to extinction, according to the group.

“BOEM’s analysis is inadequate and misleading,” said Bob Stern, president of Save LBI, of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. “Approving a 200-turbine offshore wind project based on this flawed report would be irresponsible and potentially catastrophic for the right whales and the marine ecosystem.”

The group said the offshore wind project’s pile driving construction and turbine operation will generate underwater noise levels capable of causing physiological damage, hearing loss and changes in vital behaviors like communication, navigation, migration and reproduction in the right whale.



A picture is worth 1,000 words, and this one, of a wind turbine, demonstrates its height and span. It further said the environmental impact statement, issued by BOEM recently, “inadequately assesses the threat,” by downplaying the impact of operational noise and it inexplicably reduces the number of whales that may be affected — using a much lower expected migration number than in previous projections.

“There is general scientific consensus that the whale will likely avoid the continuous noise from the turbines which will be present in or near their historic migration routes in or adjacent to the wind project area, making it virtually impossible for them to traverse these waters,” according to Save LBI. “The environmental impacts of such an undertaking are far reaching and at the very least, deserve an unbiased assessment.”

The N.J. Board of Public Utilities application period for its fourth round of offshore wind solicitation ends at 5 p.m., July 10.

— **Gina G. Scala**

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