



TOWN OF OCEAN CITY

The White Marlin Capital of the World

February 13, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Ocean City, Maryland - Offshore Wind

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing as the Mayor of the Town of Ocean City, Maryland (Town or Ocean City) to ask for your help to protect Maryland's precious jewel - the Ocean City coastline, from wind turbines slated to be installed by an Italian Company, US Wind.

Ocean City is a family beach resort town. Our thriving local economy is primarily based on beach tourism and our Town generates over \$200 million in Federal tax revenue every year. Since our Town was founded in 1875, our residents and visitors have been able to look out over the ocean and enjoy naturally beautiful sunrises free of any man-made structures. US Wind's plan to install 114 supersized windmills off our coast will destroy this vista and our economy, negatively impact property values, devastate the commercial fishing industry, adversely affect the environment, and create a multitude of safety concerns. Some studies have shown that more than 50% of beachfront property renters will refuse to rent in an area with visible windmills.

In 2014, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) auctioned off the rights for offshore wind energy development in two lease areas in Federal waters off the coast of Ocean City to an Italian firm conveniently calling itself "US Wind". Prior to the auction process, and during the creation of these lease areas, Ocean City was assured by BOEM officials on April 14, 2010, that windmills more than 12 miles from shore would not be visible from our beach. Based on that assurance and given that the lease area was 12 miles off the coast, we did not contest the lease.

However, in 2017, at a public hearing held by the Maryland Public Service Commission, I was shocked to discover that the windmills being proposed by US Wind were almost 600' tall and would be clearly visible from our shore. Not only that, but each turbine would have to be lit with flashing red lights at night, which, in the Town's view, constitutes an unacceptable eyesore. Upon learning of both the height of the turbines and the lighting requirements, the Town's City Council immediately voted unanimously to oppose the project unless the turbines could be moved out of visible range.

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MAYOR

Richard W. Meehan

CITY COUNCIL

Matthew M. James
President

Anthony J. DeLuca
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CITY MANAGER

Terence J. McGean, PE

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Diana L. Chavis, MMC

On December 3, 2024, despite seven years of pleas to government regulators, including submitting over 200 comments questioning the draft environmental impact statement for the project, BOEM and the Biden Administration issued a record of decision approving plans for US Wind to construct 114 turbines, each at 938 feet tall as well as four offshore power substations less than 11 miles from our shore. Since 2010, not only did the distance get shorter but the turbines have now substantially grown in size.

This decision left the Town with no choice but to file suit against the Federal Government on October 25, 2025, in the U.S. District Court, for the District of Maryland, Case Number 1:24-cv-0311 Mayor and City Council of Ocean City, Maryland, et. al. v. U.S. Department of the Interior. In addition to Ocean City, our lawsuit includes over 20 co-plaintiffs including Worcester County Maryland, Fenwick Island Delaware, and groups representing hotels, restaurants, condominiums, residential neighborhoods, the recreational fishing industry, commercial fishing industry, and small business. US Wind has now had its lawyers enter it as a Defendant, so it can fight Ocean City and its co-plaintiffs directly.

What we have learned over the past seven years is not only are these windmills a substantial threat to our tourism economy, but they will also greatly harm our local commercial fishing industry by making over 46,000 acres of productive fishing grounds potentially unusable due to underwater foundations, cables and other obstructions. Noise and vibration impact from pile driving and other construction activities will scare fish away and the vibrations generated by the operation of the turbines will likely prevent their return. The long-term effects on marine life of installing large diameter high voltage electric cables on the ocean floor is very concerning to our residents and local commercial fisherman. On Block Island, off the coast of Rhode Island, these dangerous cables even became exposed on the beach. These high-voltage cables not only endanger the ecosystems present, but also present a significant risk to fishermen and other actors operating on the seafloor. If the experience in Europe is any indication, these fishermen may not even have access to these crucial fishing grounds once the turbines are installed.

Just this past summer, a turbine blade at the Vineyard Wind project off Nantucket disintegrated, spewing fiberglass debris into the ocean that ultimately washed up on the shore forcing beach closures in the middle of the summer. An accident like that off the coast of Ocean City would be catastrophic to our small businesses that rely on summer tourist trade, yet there is not a single discussion in the BOEM Record of Decisions regarding how a similar accident would be prevented or how it would be cleaned up afterwards.

Other troubling concerns are: the spinning blades on these turbines, which cause false radar images, pose a safety concern for marine traffic and, more importantly, military radar; coastal tug and barge traffic will be required to detour around the wind farm increasing transit time and costs; and there is a significant risk of ships colliding with the turbines, because the wind farm is very close to the entrance of the high traffic shipping channel into the Delaware Bay. This is especially disturbing since many of these ships carry oil and dangerous chemicals. A spill off the coast of our beautiful beaches would be catastrophic both to our local ecosystems, the fishing community and our tourism economy.

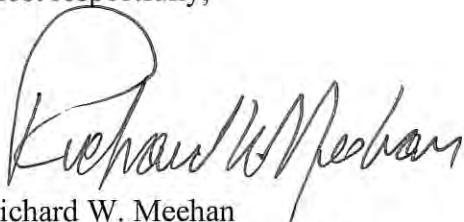
To make matters worse, these wind farms cost so much to build and operate, that they are unable to produce electricity at a competitive price. As a result, they rely on Offshore Renewable Energy Credit (OREC) subsidies created by the Maryland State legislature that force utility companies to purchase the power from these facilities at an inflated rate and then pass that increased cost onto the consumer. To justify these subsidies, the wind farm developer makes grand promises of new jobs. However, the turbines are manufactured overseas in France and China, and there are no US flagged ships capable of installing these massive structures.

The Town of Ocean City is respectfully asking you to please put an immediate moratorium on any Federal activity allowing the construction of offshore wind farms in the Maryland Lease areas. During this moratorium period, the agencies of the federal government with appropriate jurisdiction should fully study and examine all impacts that these wind turbines will have on local tourism economies, migratory bird and fish life, marine transportation and the desecration of our nation's magnificent shorelines. In addition, and most particularly, necessary steps should be taken to eliminate or at least change the location of the Maryland Lease area such that the turbines are not visible from the shoreline and the concerns of citizens, businesses, and fishermen are satisfied.

Congressman Andy Harris shares our concerns and has been a tremendous ally in our efforts to stop this ill-considered project. Our beautiful ocean vistas, economy, property values, and the livelihoods of our citizens should not be put at risk so that a foreign company can profit off government subsidies. Once these windmills are installed it will be too late.

We only have one chance to get this right and we need your help.

Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Meehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping initial "R".

Richard W. Meehan
Mayor for Town of Ocean City, Maryland

cc: Doug Burgum, U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Rep. Andy Harris