

CITY OF MARGATE CITY

RESOLUTION #135-2024

RESOLUTION UNEQUIVOCALLY OPPOSING OFFSHORE WIND PROJECTS, ENCOURAGING ALL MUNICIPALITIES TO JOIN THE OPPOSITION AND SUPPORTING THE ATLANTIC COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO UTILIZE ITS VARIOUS POWERS, INCLUDING LEGAL ACTION TO PROTECT THE FUTURE OF ATLANTIC COUNTY

WHEREAS, the future of Atlantic County's economy faces significant risk from the negative impacts of proposed offshore wind projects and the industrialization of our ocean; and

WHEREAS, developers continue to pursue federal and state approvals to construct more than 550 giant wind turbines off New Jersey's coastline and such construction will detrimentally affect the Atlantic Ocean and Atlantic County's shore communities and economy; and

WHEREAS, the Ocean Wind One/Two and Atlantic Shores offshore wind projects seek to place several hundred thousand-foot tall towers and turbines off the beaches of Atlantic and Cape May and Ocean Counties; and

WHEREAS, specifically, Atlantic Shores, and Ocean Wind developers (which still holds an active permit) will build 566 highly visible giant wind turbines starting only nine (9) miles off our beaches; and

WHEREAS, 357 of these massive structures will be 1040 feet high and 209 will be 906 feet high; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the projects adjacent to Atlantic County's coast, another group of six (6) offshore wind development projects are planned directly east of the ones next to our coastline in an area known as the New York Bight. These developers are planning to build 549 more turbines starting 27 miles off the coast at an even greater height of 1312 feet; and

WHEREAS, that is a total of 1,115 massive industrial wind turbines off of our South Jersey coast in our pristine ocean; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's breathtaking scenic ocean views will be forever lost; and

WHEREAS, Tourism remains one of New Jersey's largest economic drivers; and

WHEREAS, Atlantic County generates over \$7.7 billion in Tourism-related revenue annually with the State realizing over \$800 million in tax revenue; Cape May County generates over \$7.4 billion in Tourism-related revenue annually with the State realizing over \$600 million in tax revenue. 29.9% of all State Tourism-related tax revenue comes out of Atlantic and Cape May Counties alone. Ocean County generates another \$4.7 billion in Tourism-related revenues and over \$400 million in tax receipts; and

WHEREAS, Assessors estimate that based upon the impact of an industrialized ocean view from beach homes in Atlantic City, Brigantine, Longport, Margate, and Ventnor, total property values could be reduced by \$2.2 billion, and the County, municipalities, and school districts could lose over \$36 million in annual tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, surveys conducted show that fifty percent (50%) of prior renters would not return to Atlantic County communities with visible turbines regardless of rent discount; and

WHEREAS, including Atlantic City, Atlantic County annual rental income loss could be \$17.2 Million (10%) to \$68.9 Million (30%) and excluding Atlantic City, Atlantic County's annual revenue loss could be \$4.5 Million (10%) to \$17.9 Million (40%) and lost total rental income over 20 years could be \$65 Million to \$250 Million; and

WHEREAS, the rental income loss alone is enough to destroy Atlantic County's economy but the impacts are felt throughout every industry; and

WHEREAS, wind turbines will not be a significant tourist attraction but will, in fact, deter tourism and based on survey results, participants are not willing to pay more for rental property with a view of wind turbines off of the coast; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that between 16.5% to 24% of tourists would not visit Atlantic County beach towns and choose other places to vacation, resulting in a loss of 8,700 to 12,700 jobs or 175,000 to 255,000 job years over the project life; and

WHEREAS, massive turbines will result in \$1.3 to \$1.9 Billion in annual revenue losses or net present value of \$17.4 Billion to \$25.5 Billion over the project life; and

WHEREAS, industrialized ocean views will create a \$142 to \$206 million government tax loss revenue over the project life; and

WHEREAS, offshore wind turbines do not create lower cost energy for local residents and business, especially fragile seasonal tourism businesses; and

WHEREAS, based upon the most recent analysis for 11GW of offshore wind energy in New Jersey, electricity rates are expected to increase by over 55% for residents, 70% for

commercial and over 80% for industrial users by 2047 and based upon the most recent solicitation for 3742 MW of power over 20 years, rates are projected to increase by 20-30%; and

WHEREAS, offshore wind turbines not only impact our onshore tourist economy but also affect the recreational fishing industry; and

WHEREAS, projection envision approximately \$19 Million per year losses to the New Jersey recreational fishing economy over an estimated 20-year period because of wind turbine construction and operation; and

WHEREAS, Atlantic County famously hosts significant regional and state events and attractions and the future scheduling and success of such events becomes questionable with the development of giant wind turbines immediately off the coast of Atlantic County; and

WHEREAS, for example, the County hosts the annual Farley Marina Jimmy Johnson Fishing Tournament, the annual Atlantic City Air Show, and world class beach concerts, and other beach centric entertainment events, bars and restaurants and the future of those events becomes uncertain; and

WHEREAS, the air show alone brings 100,000 tourists to Atlantic City and \$50 million to the economy; and

WHEREAS, the construction of turbines and the loss of tourists will result in casino contraction; and

WHEREAS, closure of casinos because of operating losses may jeopardize the casino industry which, in turn, could reduce local and state taxes/fees including but not limited to the annual \$200 million PILOT tax payments and \$700+ million annual Gaming Specific taxes and fees; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Legislature expressed concern for the Board of Public Utilities ("BPU") approach on offshore wind project because of unanswered questions about the economic impact these projects will have on ratepayers as well as potential impacts to one of our state's largest economic drivers, tourism at the shore; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has asked the BPU to share these impacts with the communities affected and the Legislature before moving forward with these new offshore projects; and

WHEREAS, the City of Margate City remains concerned about the negative impacts of the build-as-fast-as-possible approach that the State of New Jersey is currently taking on offshore wind; and

WHEREAS, these massive ocean wind projects that Governor Murphy has planned for the waters off the coast of New Jersey are being utilized to advance a dangerous experiment with little understanding or concern for the many, potentially catastrophic, impacts the installation of these industrial power generating facilities will have on the environment, economy, fishing industry, property values, and cost of electricity for the people of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the BPU and the developers cannot assure the Legislature that construction of these offshore wind facilities will not negatively impact tourism; and

WHEREAS, even taken at their own word, one of the developers indicates that tourism losses could be as high as 15%, creating a scenario where New Jersey would lose over \$210 million in annual tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, such construction will have a devastating impact on New Jersey families and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, neither BPU nor any other state or federal agency have adequately studied these impacts on our economy; and

WHEREAS, the Margate community supports appropriate clean energy programs, but believes these projects should proceed no further until the potential damage to our tourism-based economy is studied and quantified; and

WHEREAS, before these projects are rushed to be built, our citizens need to know what the real economic and environmental impact will be; and

WHEREAS, the negative impacts from the infrasound generated by these massive ocean wind turbines on marine mammals and humans living along the coast is still unknown and could have long-term damaging effects that may change the Jersey shore forever; and

WHEREAS, despite the pronouncements by Executive agencies of the State of New Jersey that the surveying operations by these off shore wind developers is not leading to the demise of whales, dolphins and porpoises, the City is aware that in 2018, the Murphy Administration joined a federal lawsuit in the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, case number 2:18-cv-03326-RMG, seeking an injunction against similar surveying activities by other offshore energy companies; and

WHEREAS, in the lawsuit, the State of New Jersey alleged that “the prospect of seeing marine mammals – whether directly from [New Jersey’s] shores, or from boats launched from

[New Jersey's] shores – is an important draw for the State's coastal economies." And further, "Whales, dolphins, and porpoises have finely tuned senses of hearing, on which they rely to navigate, seek food, avoid danger, and communicate among themselves. Many species are vulnerable to human activities"; and

WHEREAS, the lawsuit further alleged, "The seismic testing activities at issue here will harm [New Jersey] and [its] citizens. They will harass marine mammals and other wildlife that commonly move between federal and state waters, including the waters of [New Jersey]. Further seismic testing's negative impact on marine mammals' health and abundance will make [New Jersey] less attractive for coast tourism, will deprive [New Jersey] of tax revenues associated with coastal tourism, and could create cascading effects on the [New Jersey's] economically important commercial and recreational fishing industries."; and

WHEREAS, the City of Margate City finds that the State of New Jersey's current insistence that the offshore wind activities will have no negative impacts on marine mammals, tourism or fisheries to be inconsistent with reality and contrary to the arguments the State of New Jersey made in Federal Court in 2018; and

WHEREAS, although the Governor and certain other New Jersey officials and representatives of offshore wind developers continue to represent to the public that the immediate construction of these offshore wind electric power generation facilities is of emergent importance in efforts to combat climate change, the City is aware of significant findings both governmental and private sector researchers to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in 2021, in Volume II of its Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Vineyard Wind 1 offshore wind project at page A-66 states, "Therefore, the Proposed Action (the construction of multiple offshore wind project along the East Coast] would have negligible impacts on climate change during these activities and an overall minor beneficial impact of Green House Gas emissions compared to the generation of the same amount of energy by the existing grids. Development of offshore wind projects and the construction, implementation, operation, maintenance and the eventual decommissioning activities would cause some Green House Gas emissions increases primarily through the emissions of CO₂. Overall, it is anticipated that there would be no collective impact on global warming as a result of offshore wind projects... though they may beneficially contribute to a broader combination of actions to reduce future impacts of climate change."; and

WHEREAS, BOEM concluded in 2021 that building multiple offshore wind farms in Atlantic waters of the East Coast of the United States will essentially have no impact on reducing global warming; and

WHEREAS, the City of Margate City through sharing data with neighboring municipalities and counties, is aware of studies conducted by researchers at Harvard University that found that the installation of scores of wind turbines in a concentrated area will actually raise surface temperatures, especially in the immediate area of the turbines. The Harvard researchers concluded, “The direct climate impacts of wind power are instant, while the benefits of reduced emissions accumulate slowly. If your perspective in the next 10 years, wind power actually has – in some respects – more climate impact than coal or gas,” David & Keith, Climate Impacts of Wind Power, Joule, Volume II, Issue 12, P2618, December 19, 2018; and

WHEREAS, it would appear that combating climate change does not appear to be advanced by the installation of wind projects thus the urgent necessity of stripping the City of home rule does not appear to exist; and

WHEREAS, post-construction evaluations of the projects’ impact will be meaningless to the residents of Atlantic County when the economy is decimated and to the ocean life after their habitats are severely altered;

WHEREAS, the recent, unprecedented deaths and stranding of marine mammals including whales, dolphins and porpoises along the shores of Atlantic County and other New Jersey Counties and surrounding states is of the utmost concern to the City and no satisfactory answer to the question of whether or not the actions of offshore wind developers are leading to the deaths of whales and other marine mammals had been provided by any federal or state agency; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission does not find it an acceptable answer for state and federal officials and agencies to state that they are not certain what is leading to the unprecedented deaths of multiple marine mammals but that they somehow know for certain that the deaths are not related in any way to the activities of offshore wind development companies; and

WHEREAS, the City has grave concerns about the potential negative impact on our tourism economy as a result of the installation of scores of offshore wind turbines visible from shore; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commissioners joins and supports the approach and statements made by United States Congressman Van Drew, State Senator Polistina, Assemblywoman Claire Swift and Assemblyman Don Guardian in the State Legislatures’ efforts to vote against Senate Bill S4019 and Assembly Bill A5651 that would give millions of dollars in federal tax credits to the offshore wind project that will adversely affect the rate payers of this municipality, this County and this State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Margate City, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey that:

1. The preamble to this resolution is incorporated here by reference and made part hereof as the findings of the City Commission.
2. The City of Margate City opposes the Atlantic Shore and Ocean Wind turbine projects; and
3. The City determines that the installation of offshore wind projects and other such projects, as currently designed and intended will cause great harm to our marine environment and great harm to the tourism and fisheries sector of our local economy and may cause to other sectors such as real estate.
4. The City of Margate City further opposes any wind turbine projects along New Jersey's coast, regardless of height of the structures and distance from New Jersey's pristine shorelines, until proper studies are performed; and
5. Studies must include full evaluation of the impact of such construction on the tourism industry, the economy in general, the Atlantic County labor market; and
6. Studies must better understand the environmental impact of ocean habitats, the migration of ocean mammals and organisms that create a healthy biosphere to ensure continued protection of the Atlantic Ocean, waterways and back bays and ocean life in general; and
7. The City resolves that until such time that the wind developers present a project design that, to the greatest extent possible, mitigates the negative environmental and economic impacts of its project, the City objects to and opposes the construction of the projects.
8. The City of Margate City calls on the municipalities in Atlantic, Cape May and Ocean Counties to join in Brigantine's opposition to these wind turbine projects because of the significant negative impacts to the New Jersey coastline and coastline communities; and
9. The City of Margate City encourages and urges the Atlantic County Executive and Board of County Commissioners to pursue all appropriate action, including but not limited to legal action to prevent the approval and construction of wind turbine projects because of the detrimental impact they would have on Atlantic County municipalities; and

10. The City of Margate City recognizes and appreciates the efforts already initiated by Congressman Jeff Van Drew and Senator Vince Polistana and Assembly Members Don Guardian and Claire Swift; and

11. The City of Margate City shall provide copy of this resolution to each elected official at the County, State and Federal level as well as serve a copy upon Governor Phil Murphy, Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette, Members of the Board of Public Utilities, the Senate President Nicholas Scutari, and the Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin.

ROLL CALL:

NAME	MOTION	SECOND	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Collins		X	X			
Blumberg				X		
Horn	X		X			

DATE: May 16, 2024

CERTIFICATION

I, Johanna Casey, Clerk of Margate City, Atlantic County, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Commissioners of the City of Margate City at a meeting of said Commission held on May 16, 2024 and said resolution was adopted by not less than a two-thirds vote of the members of the Commission.

Johanna Casey

 Johanna Casey, RMC, City Clerk

