



The State of New Hampshire  
**Department of Environmental Services**



**Robert R. Scott, Commissioner**

January 24, 2018

The Honorable Richard Barry  
Chair, Science, Technology and Energy Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 304  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1611 *An Act establishing a committee to study off-shore wind energy development.*

Dear Chair Barry and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1611. This bill establishes a committee to study off-shore wind energy development. The NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) takes no position on this bill but offers the following information as background for your consideration.

HB 1312 (Chapter 180, Laws of 2014) established a committee to study offshore wind energy and the development of other ocean power technology. NHDES participated in this commission which included the following key findings in its final report:

- It is estimated that the wind resource off New Hampshire's coast has the potential to generate 2.8GW of electricity.
- The best place to develop offshore wind power appears to be three or more miles beyond the Isles of Shoals due to the area's increased wind strength and consistency, reduced potential for conflicts with commercial and recreational users, and reduced onshore visual impacts from the wind turbines themselves.
- The waters beyond the Isles of Shoals are too deep (>50m) for conventional wind turbine foundations attached to the seafloor. Floating platforms are the most viable alternative in these deeper waters.
- Floating platforms are used extensively for offshore oil and gas extraction, but have not been employed for offshore wind generation in the United States. NOTE: The first commercial floating wind energy facility was installed in Scotland in 2017.
- Offshore wind development has the potential to generate significant economic activity for Portsmouth Harbor and surrounding communities. Economic benefits to New Hampshire businesses could be derived from manufacturing, assembling and deploying turbine components, as well as supply chain and servicing needs, including cabling, substation and shore grid connections, engineering, environmental services, and operation and maintenance of the turbines themselves.

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- The Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) oversees the development of wind energy in federal waters. Locating a wind farm three or more miles offshore requires a lease from BOEM.
  - BOEM has created a process for identifying suitable areas for offshore wind development in cooperation with states through the establishment of intergovernmental offshore renewable energy task forces. The process is initiated by a gubernatorial request.
  - Task forces are comprised of state and local government officials as well as state and federal agency personnel. To date, 13 task forces have been established.
  - Task forces work with BOEM, in part, to provide a regional perspective to the leasing process, facilitate site selection through stakeholder coordination, promote issue identification and mitigation of potential impacts, and collaborate on the use of scientific research and information.
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The HB 1312 committee report also recommended that the states of New Hampshire and Maine and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts establish a multi-state offshore renewable energy task force, similar to the multi-state task force established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the state of Rhode Island in 2010, to identify ways in which the states can work cooperatively in the development of offshore wind. That work resulted in the first offshore wind development in the United States which is located near Block Island.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 1611. Should you have further questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Steve Couture, Coastal Program Administrator, Water Division, at 603-271-8801, [Steven.Couture@des.nh.gov](mailto:Steven.Couture@des.nh.gov), or Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Management Bureau, Water Division, at 603-271-3289, [Ted.Diers@des.nh.gov](mailto:Ted.Diers@des.nh.gov).

Sincerely,



Robert R. Scott  
Commissioner

cc: Representative Cushing

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