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Clean Ocean Action STATEMENT

OCEAN AT RISK: MASSIVE FULL-SCALE OCEAN INDUSTRIALIZATION

WITHOUT CAUTION FOR MARINE LIFE

BOEM Announces Final Sale Notice for NY/NJ Bight Wind Energy Areas

It is a sad day for the ocean off the New Jersey and New York coasts, which is one of the most ecologically important areas for marine life—especially whales and dolphins. Rather than focusing on faster, cheaper, safer, better green energy solutions, the region is racing to sell-off large scale areas of the ocean to major industrial developers, including Big Oil. This massive industrialization of this essential ocean realm is larger than anywhere in the US waters: there are already at least 550 wind turbines proposed in the NY/NJ Bight, not including those that would result from the 488,201 acres announced today, and these turbines will be significantly larger than any other turbines in operation in the world. Offshore wind development is neither clean nor harmless; it results in significant heat, pollution, and ecological impacts, as well as many other consequences that are not even understood yet.

While today's announcement by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) as well as the Governors of New York and New Jersey selectively makes commitments to "ocean users" and tribal interests, it wholly ignores the most at-risk populations: ***marine life***.

This industrial fast-tracked approach is not transparent, responsible, or reasonable. Clean Ocean Action (COA) supports pilot-scale projects, such as those being considered in all other regions of the Atlantic. Pilot-scale projects will help resolve the uncertainty that remains about the marine impacts of offshore wind, thereby ensuring that the very ecosystem which has buffered the impacts of climate change is not destroyed and that the very soul of this region's economy, the clean ocean economy, continues to have the support it needs to thrive.

Federal agencies and New York and New Jersey are racing to build offshore wind. BOEM published a "Finding of No Significant Impact" in December 2021 for the thousands of acres announced today, but COA maintains that the decision was too premature given the current gaps in scientific literature concerning the impacts of offshore wind turbines and related infrastructure on marine species and their habitats. While BOEM will still need to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement after the leases have been awarded to analyze the specific environmental consequences of any proposed project, we should learn from the existing leases that are already in the works before selling-off another nearly 500,000 acres of public ocean lands and waters for industrial development by private companies—many of which are or were oil and gas companies.

There are vast unanswered questions with this newly proposed industry, especially at the magnitude, scale, and speed of development currently proposed. What are the true comprehensive onshore and offshore costs of this massive industrial growth over the next 20 years? How will the energy needed to fuel this massive development be generated? Why is there such excitement about the industrial growth when we should be focusing on using fewer fossil fuels? Where is the rush with even greater

investments in, requirements for, and implementation of energy conservation and efficiency in energy use, which is the planet's best hope for reducing climate change? COA remains deeply disappointed that there is not an equal or greater rush to build-up onshore renewable energy, such as solar and wind, as they are able to come online faster and allow for direct use.

Likewise, there must be FULL DISCLOSURE of all the onshore impacts of offshore wind energy development too. What is the full scope and plan for onshore development to meet the industrial needs of offshore wind industry? How is coastal development for the offshore wind industry consistent with combatting sea level rise through less coastal development and more resiliency? How will New Jersey meet the needs of the thousands of jobs promised? Where will all these people live? Where will all the port activities take place? How many businesses will be displaced? Again, many important questions remain unanswered.

Clean Ocean Action supports **responsible** and **reasonable** offshore wind which can play a part in climate change solutions. However, the leases announced today and the fast-tracking of offshore wind energy development are neither.

The ocean has already buffered climate impacts, but to her own demise with sea-level rise and ocean acidification. A healthy ocean is key to helping reduce impacts from climate change. However, the current fast-tracked scope and scale of offshore wind energy development off the NY/NJ coast is neither reasonable nor responsible given all the unknowns. This industrialization and privatization is too much, too fast, and puts the ocean at risk.

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