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September 25, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

I write to you with grave concerns regarding the development of offshore wind along the northeast coast, the sufficiency of the process for approving these projects and the lack of due diligence regarding the long-term effects and impacts these projects will have on national security and the radar used for marine vessels and military and commercial aircraft.

Of particular concern is the Empire Wind Project, located off my district in the New York/New Jersey Bight, currently under construction which I respectfully request you immediately halt pending robust review and certification that this project—in close proximity to several civilian airports, military airfields, and critical radar installations—shall not create the potential to impede national defense and inhibit critical commercial industries.

President Trump's decisive action to suspend these projects in January to allow for real inspection and review was bold and well founded based on environmental, economic, and increasingly, national security grounds. Secretary Doug Burgum and his team at the Department of Interior have already identified significant insufficiencies in several projects approved under the prior administrations.

It is probably no surprise to you, that in the area of national defense, the prior administration also downplayed the threats to our national security posed by the large scale offshore wind industrialization including radar used for missile defense, air traffic, marine traffic, as well as sonar impacts from electromagnetic interference, the impact on training grounds off the northeast coast, and potential hazards posed by these structures during a time of conflict.

In March 2023, the House of Representatives passed my legislation calling for an investigation to be conducted by the General Accountability Office to determine the impacts of New Jersey's offshore wind development on the environment, the fishing industry, military operations, navigational safety and more. Ultimately, in April, 2025, the GAO published the

results of its investigation, with critical findings stating, **“Wind turbines can reduce the performance of radar systems used for defense and maritime navigation and safety in several ways.”**

NOAA itself reported to Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s BOEM saying the “proposed turbine structure will interfere with the operation of the 11 High Frequency radar installations that protect navigation and make rescue possible in the New York Bight and along the New Jersey coast’.”

This further tracks with the GAO study, which states the materials used to construct wind turbines, mainly steel, possess a high electromagnetic reflectivity, which, along with the rotating blades, can make it hard to see targets on different radar systems, including high-frequency and marine vessel radar.”

A BOEM radar interference analysis from August of 2020 stated, “future offshore wind energy installations on the Atlantic coast may impact land-based radar systems.”

Two years later, a 2022 study by the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine determined that “wind turbine generator returns obfuscate the Marine Vessel Radar picture for both magnetron based and solid-state radar thereby affecting navigation decision making.”

Their findings said: “wind turbine generators lead to interference in marine vessel radar and will frequently lead to unintended consequences of suppressing detection of small targets like boats or buoys or creating misleading images on radar screens.” Ominously the National Academy of Sciences report found, “wind turbine generator mitigation techniques have not been substantially investigated, implemented, matured, or deployed.” These findings take on greater significance based on the rapid development of unmanned aerial and underwater vehicles.

The updated [Federal Interagency Wind Turbine Interference Mitigation Strategy](#) published in August of 2023 admits there are no effective solutions to solve radar interference, and have extended the deadline for solutions to 2035 – admitting there will be no mitigation techniques or technologies to address compromised radar while wind turbine projects in the North Atlantic are already under constructed.

As you well know, New Jersey is host to critical military installations, including Naval Weapons Station Earle and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, both of which are located in my district, New Jersey’s 4th Congressional District. These installations and the critical missions rely on clear radar returns and unfettered access to the Atlantic Ocean and air space off the coast.

We have a duty to thoroughly investigate these concerns and determine the facts surrounding the impact offshore wind turbines and associated infrastructures will have on radar, sonar, vessel trafficking, including the nation’s Integrated Underwater Surveillance System.

Allies such as [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Taiwan](#), and [Japan](#), have all halted offshore wind developments due to objections from their Armed Forces and concerns over radar, sonar, vessel navigation, and freedom of movement for aircraft. In fact, last fall, [the Swedish government decided to close an entire area of the Baltic Sea for offshore wind development](#), arguing the development would have “unacceptable consequences for Sweden’s military defense.”

Additionally, it is critical to ascertain the Department of War's ability to defend critical infrastructure during a time of conflict, especially such infrastructure that is not located on land, but rather at sea where bad actors have greater freedom of movement. Should this ability not exist, it must be brought to the attention of Congress as it discusses new threats such as UAV's and unmanned underwater systems.

[Officials in the United Kingdom](#) have expressed concern over vulnerabilities of offshore windfarms and underwater transmission lines to Russian sabotage. UK Defense Secretary Ben Wallace has stated "Russia has the intent and ability" to sabotage the UK's energy and communication lines, noting that the Russians "have a specific naval programme designed to both look at and potentially sabotage or attack critical national infrastructure belonging to its adversaries."

Finally, let me underscore that [the foreign ownership of the companies](#) driving the development of the projects off our coast presents significant concerns that the American economy is being used to enact the policy platform of European governments that continually demonstrate an opposition to the closely held values of the American people.

Equinor, the Norwegian energy company which has been allowed to proceed with construction of its planned Empire Wind project off the coast of New Jersey and New York—while it remains under the President's Executive Order review—has a cooperation agreement with China Power International Holding (CPIH). CPIH is a subsidiary fully owned by State Power Investment Corporation, one of the top State-owned power corporations in China. [Equinor has already been caught sharing sensitive seabed data with entities wholly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party](#), and now has in its possession detailed seabed maps of New York and New Jersey Bight—some of the most economically and militarily important waters in the United States—data paid for by the American taxpayer.

Mr. Secretary, in your further attempts to reorient the Department of War to its mission of protecting and defending America, I respectfully request you use all tools available to your office to determine whether the development of offshore wind in the Northeast—which includes some of the busiest water ways and airspace in the nation—aligns with currently available technologies and abilities to carry out the Department of War's mission.

Sincerely,


CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress