

**CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**  
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

**MONMOUTH**  
112 Village Center Drive  
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510  
(732) 780-3035

**MERCER**  
4573 South Broad Street  
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215  
(609) 585-7878

**OCEAN**  
405 Route 539  
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303  
(609) 585-7878  
By Appointment



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, AFRICA, GLOBAL  
HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL-  
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

[www.chrissmith.house.gov](http://www.chrissmith.house.gov)

March 26, 2025

Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

I am writing to advise you that Equinor, a Norwegian Energy multinational is planning to move forward with construction of its Empire Wind 1 project off the coast of New Jersey and New York as early as this April.

This is an alarming development and should not be allowed before the comprehensive review of offshore wind ordered by President Trump's January 20<sup>th</sup> executive order is completed. The executive order states that the assessment is needed to review the many shortcomings of the Federal wind leasing process including, "potential inadequacies in various environmental reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act."

The intention here is clear. The NEPA review process under the Biden administration, when Empire Wind was approved, was completely inadequate and failed to answer critical questions surrounding these projects related to national security, environmental health, and the economic wellbeing of nearby communities. Should Empire Wind be allowed to proceed under this flawed Biden process the results could be catastrophic, disrupting some of nation's busiest waters and negatively affecting important radar systems. BOEM has never supplied a compelling argument for mitigation on a slew of issues offshore wind is expected to create in the Northeast region.

Without specific details on mitigation methods the public cannot be assured that this project will not blind critical FAA and national security radar. Empire Wind's Record of Decision states that Empire Wind must work with NORAD regarding radar interference to Riverhead NY's Air Route Surveillance Radar, but it offers no specifics on how these impacts will be managed. A stunning flaw, given that this project is in the shadow of three major airports.

Additionally, the collapse of a Vineyard Wind turbine this past summer off the coast of Nantucket offers a preview of significant environmental threats. Following the collapse of a 57-ton turbine blade, which was produced in Canada, a massive amount of fiberglass and foam were dumped into the sea and onto Nantucket's beaches. This forced beaches on the island to close

during the critically important tourist season and threatened sailors and fishermen who were out at sea before the collapse became public.

Another unaddressed issue is the impact of severe weather on offshore wind farms. Should Empire Wind 1's expected 54 turbines be rushed through one can only imagine the devastation from a singular hurricane or superstorm reaching my state. The cleanup may take years, and it would not be only fiberglass and foam, but oil lubricants used in operation of the turbine. These concerns, brought up by an academic study found that, "There is very substantial risk that Category 3 and higher hurricanes can destroy half or more of the turbines at some locations," have yet to be addressed.

Hurricanes aren't the only direct threat to the turbines themselves. A singular cargo ship losing control, as was seen recently in the Francis Scott Key bridge Collapse, could do massive amounts of damage. Such a situation is more likely than many may think, as large vessels could struggle to spot smaller vessels as they exit the area around the farm leading to evasive maneuvers or collisions.

These are only a few of the many dangers Empire Wind and the larger offshore wind buildout still present to our coastal communities; they alone are already sufficient cause to halt these projects until further review can be done. Yet irresponsibly Equinor has decided to move forward endangering American lives and our environment.

Equinor should recognize that the pause and critical assessment are necessary. Empire Wind cannot safely proceed until much needed further review can be done to protect the public and our eastern seaboard. I ask that you do everything in your power to halt Equinor's underhanded rush to begin piledriving and block construction until the critical assessment can be completed.

Thank you for your attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress