

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2021

Ms. Amanda Lefton, Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Director Lefton:

As Members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation, we write to congratulate you on your recent confirmation to lead the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and express our support for the Bureau's efforts to promptly and responsibly advance lease sales of existing wind energy areas (WEAs) and identify new WEAs off the coast of North Carolina. We look forward to working with BOEM under your leadership to move these processes forward, capture the massive economic potential of this nascent industry, and meet the clean energy goals outlined by both President Biden and our home state.

According to a 2021 report prepared for the North Carolina Department of Commerce titled *Building North Carolina's Offshore Wind Supply Chain*, the offshore wind industry is projected to invest nearly \$140 billion in the U.S. by 2035 for the manufacturing, construction, and maintenance of offshore wind projects. As a new industry for the U.S., offshore wind presents the opportunity to develop a substantial domestic manufacturing supply chain, create well-paying jobs, and infuse new manufacturing investments and tax revenues across the country.

As outlined in the Commerce report, North Carolina is particularly well-positioned to meaningfully contribute to the offshore wind industry. We rank first among east coast states in both technical potential for offshore wind generation capacity and manufacturing workforce. Together with an established land-based wind industry supply chain, world-class university and community college network, robust intermodal transit system, and deep-water port infrastructure, North Carolina's unique set of strengths stand to accommodate all facets of the industry.

For North Carolina to realize its full potential in the offshore market, BOEM must expeditiously begin leasing existing WEAs and identify new WEAs off the state's coast. We are concerned that former President Trump's 10-year moratorium on offshore wind leasing is set to take effect on July 1, 2022, posing a critical threat to our ability to develop this resource and realize the economic and environmental benefits it has to offer. We respectfully urge BOEM to take swift action to hold lease sales for two of our existing WEAs—Wilmington East and Wilmington West—so that lease agreements can be executed in advance of the July 1 deadline. We also respectfully request that the Biden-Harris Administration take all available measures to remove the impending decade-long moratorium on offshore wind leasing.

We understand that there is work required before the BOEM can begin leasing existing WEAs to reflect any updated research, ocean uses, and related activities (e.g., military and tourism) since the areas' original 2014 designation. We stand ready to work closely with BOEM, the State of North Carolina, and other partners to take thoughtful and prompt steps towards accomplishing these goals. To that end, we request a briefing from you and your team before April 23, 2021, to discuss BOEM's timeline and strategic plan for moving forward with lease sales for our existing WEAs in advance of the July 1, 2022 deadline and identification of new WEAs.

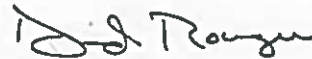
As our country begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we capitalize on growth opportunities that will provide both near and long-term benefits for our communities and economy. BOEM has the opportunity to accelerate this recovery by bolstering an industry that is poised to provide billions in economic development and hundreds of thousands of new living-wage jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. North Carolina can and will be a leader in offshore wind energy generation capacity, research, and manufacturing, but to achieve this we need expeditious action from BOEM—particularly given the challenge imposed by the forthcoming leasing moratorium. We look forward to hearing from you and working together on this important matter.

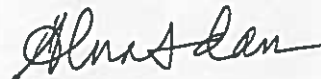
Very truly yours,



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



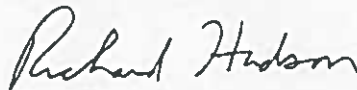
David E. Price
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Kathy Manning
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor of North Carolina

Ms. Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs