

June 11, 2015

The Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe;

On behalf of the 55 organizations, businesses, and individuals signed below – representing more than 60,000 state residents and more than 120 groups – we urge you to take the steps that will enable Virginia to capture the immense wind energy resource off our shores. Climate change poses an urgent threat to coastal and low-lying communities particularly in Virginia. The Commonwealth has seen the highest levels of sea level rise of any state along the East Coast, and the Hampton Roads area is second only to New Orleans in its vulnerability to sea level rise. The risk that sea level rise and storm surges pose to valuable development along Virginia's coastline, including military installations that drive Virginia's coastal economy, highlights the urgent need for investments in clean, carbon-free energy sources.

Here in Virginia the table is set for development of our offshore wind resource. The 113,000 acre Wind Energy Area has been leased to Dominion Power, and the state and Dominion are cooperating on the 12 megawatt (MW) demonstration project adjacent to the lease area. However, state policies need to provide incentives to facilitate the development of this clean, zero-fuel-cost energy source. State policy must encourage and reward the upfront investment to capture this clean energy.

Investing in this pollution-free energy source can both reduce pollution and boost our local economies. And because offshore wind can blow strongest during times of peak energy demand – afternoons and winter cold snaps - it can diversify our energy portfolio with large amounts of valuable, clean power just when we need it most. The Commonwealth should aggressively pursue offshore wind power (OSW) as part of its Clean Power Plan compliance strategy.

Countries around the world are already reaping the economic and environmental benefits of offshore wind power. In Europe, this booming industry currently supports 70,000 long-term, quality jobs. Now, the U.S. can benefit from more than twenty years of lessons learned across the Atlantic, including technology advancements that have lowered costs and enable development in areas far offshore where the stronger wind resource can deliver greater environmental and economic benefits.

The 2010 VCERC study projected that 10,000 jobs for Virginia would result from developing 3200 MWs of Virginia's OSW resource. Given its port facilities and location, if Virginia can move a substantial project forward in the near term, it would capture jobs and economic growth that could go to other states if Virginia lags behind.

State leaders play a critical role in advancing offshore wind power off their shores. The federal government working with the State has identified an appropriate location for offshore wind development. We call on you to commit to the following actions to help Virginia realize the golden opportunity on our horizon:

- **Set a near term target for offshore wind power generation.** The State Energy plan calls for timely build out of the Wind Energy Area. We urge you to adopt a target of 1000 MW by the end

of 2022 and another 1000 MW by the end of 2025. As Virginia develops its strategy to implement the EPA's Clean Power Plan, offshore wind power offers a unique and scalable pollution-free power source for meeting carbon emission reduction targets.

- **Advance policies that ensure a competitive market for offshore wind power.** Virginia must provide incentives to utilities and developers to make the upfront investment to capture this clean energy source. In addition, your federal legislative priorities should include reinstating a long term investment tax credit for OSW.
- **Support cost recovery for offshore wind investment.** We ask that you take a leadership role in having the SCC and General Assembly confirm cost recovery for the 12 MW VOWTAP project, and pave the way for cost recovery for build-out of the full Wind Energy Area.
- **Work with BOEM to ensure an efficient, transparent, and environmentally responsible offshore wind development process that protects wildlife, particularly endangered marine mammals and sea turtles.**
- **Invest in key research, initiatives, and infrastructure needed to spur offshore wind development.** Support a budget that provides at least \$1 million per year for offshore wind research and infrastructure development. Ensure the funding and support for at least one FTE at DMME devoted full time to OSW development.
- **Recruit an OSW OEM manufacturer to locate in Hampton Roads to serve VA and neighboring states.** Market the state's port facilities and capacity, and use the Port Readiness study in recruiting supply chain businesses to Virginia, and in developing a plan to fill any gaps that may be identified.

Virginia's citizens, businesses, and environment are depending on you for bold leadership in ensuring a clean energy future. We strongly urge you to recognize just how much we have to gain from harnessing our offshore wind power potential in a manner that protects wildlife and their habitats. For the sake of coastal resiliency, local jobs, increased investments in economic development and manufacturing, and future generations, we thank you for your commitment to this clean energy solution, and look forward to working with you to bring this transformational new power source online.

Sincerely,

Conservation Groups

350 Loudoun

Appalachian Voices

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Earth Day @ Loudoun

Environment Virginia

eNRG – Energizing Renewable Growth

Fairfax Climate Watch

Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Herndon Environmental Network

Mason Green Patriots

Moms Clean Air Force

New Virginia Majority

Oceana

Reston Environmental Action

Southern Environmental Law Center
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia League of Conservation Voters

Businesses

757 Creative Space, Norfolk
Aesop Technologies, Norfolk
Balance Bicycle, Richmond
Black Hand Coffee, Richmond
Carytown Bicycle Company, Richmond
Carytown Teas, Richmond
Casual Adventure, Arlington
Continuum Energy Solutions, Alexandria
Deep Groove Records, Richmond
E3 Living, Ashburn
Eco Maniac Company, Virginia Beach
Energy Sherlock, Leesburg
For Goodness Sake Natural Foods, Leesburg
Frankie James Photography, Richmond
GreenEcoSavers, LLC, Reston
GreenLife Adventure Sports, Norfolk
La Fromagerie, Alexandria
McLean Artisans, McLean
Naro Theater, Norfolk
Organic Food Depot, Virginia Beach
Seaside Flags & Gifts, Virginia Beach
SolarMill, Henrico
The Sugar Cube, Alexandria
The Green Onion, Norfolk
The Very Virginia Shop, Leesburg
Transition Triathlon, Leesburg
Velocity Comics, Richmond

Individuals

Senator Edwards, District 21
Senator Lewis, District 06
Senator Favola, District 31
Delegate Bulova, District 37
Delgate Kory, District 38
Delegate Patrick Hope, District 47
Delegate Rob Krupicka, District 45
Delegate Plum, District 36
Delegate Sickles, District 43
Delegate Watts, District 39