

From: [tyson bottenus](#)
To: [PublicComments, PUC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] : Comments on OSW Docket 22-22-EL
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Offshore wind is a valuable tool that can and should be used to eliminate our dependence on oil, whether domestic or international. It has the ability to provide Rhode Island (and New England) energy independence and will hopefully lower some customers' electricity bills. The General Assembly has done a tremendous job passing bills such as the Act on Climate and the Renewable Energy Standard Act to ensure that our state uses only renewable energy by 2033. Legislation like this will encourage more renewable energy to be built - it has to. With that in mind, emphasis should be placed on the benefits certain offshore wind developers can offer to the state, not the benefits the state can offer them.

I conducted my Masters research at the University of Rhode Island on Providence residents' perceptions of offshore wind. The overwhelming majority of residents' perceptions was not that climate change is the greatest threat impacting them. They felt that there were much bigger issues such as pollution from our current infrastructure or the cost of energy. I heard from residents who had to call out of work to take their children to the hospital because of asthma. Rhode Island has the ninth-highest rate of asthma in the country, with 10.9 percent of the population suffering from the respiratory condition. We have a golden opportunity to put forth a wish list of desires to these developers - let's not waste it. I heard from residents who had to choose between paying their energy bills or paying their rent. They shouldn't be placed in these situations.

For example, we could advocate that a community fund be established by the developer that could be used for miscellaneous projects or in winter time when energy bills tend to increase for certain residents. These community funds could be used for any number of projects, from removing lead pipes in neighborhoods to improving the electric grid, installing energy efficient windows or electric car charging stations.

We could require the offshore wind developer to fund tree planting in the communities that will be most affected by climate change in the state: Washington Park and South Providence. Or we could ask them to devote a little bit of time and money to sprucing up the newly-established Right of Way on Public Street in Providence. Residents in Providence have little to no relief from the summer heat and while the Right of Way is a "good start" it's currently unusable to the community because of years of neglect and the abuse from the fossil fuel infrastructure. Restoring this Right of Way would be a symbol of good will that the developer could use to demonstrate their commitment to improving the community they stand to impact the most.

Developers have done a terrific job coordinating with unions to provide good wages and benefits for their workers. They have done a terrific job coordinating with fishermen and other groups that stand to be impacted by the construction of their infrastructure. The last piece of the puzzle is for them to be more involved with the communities they stand to directly impact, namely the residents of Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time,

Tyson Bottenus

Resident of Providence, Rhode Island