



Roots 2Empower

Fostering an equitable, regenerative future.

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July 16, 2025

Energy Facilities Siting Board
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

Docket No. SB-2022-02: Support for SouthCoast Wind Permit

Dear Chairman Gerwatowski, Director Gray, and Associate Director Brady:

On behalf of Roots 2Empower, a community-based environmental justice organization that works in Rhode Island's urban core, I express my enthusiastic support for South Coast Wind's application to construct major energy facilities in order to deliver clean, local energy to the regional grid and power more than 800,000 homes. This type of construction is routine and necessary to deliver ensure reliability for consumers and to facilitate the transition to net-zero emissions by 2050, as mandated by the 2021 Act on Climate. The expeditious permitting of clean energy projects is imperative, not only to meet our state's climate mandate, but to mitigate and eventually avoid the harmful pollution from existing fossil energy systems in our communities. As climate impacts continue to worsen, we need our state leadership to do everything in its power to access the safe and affordable clean energy that exists abundantly off our shores.

At Roots 2Empower, our mission is to foster an equitable and community-driven transition to a regenerative future, and offshore wind energy plays a foundational role in achieving that vision. The transition to a regenerative economy presents a transformational opportunity to redress economic, health, environmental, and racial disparities intrinsically linked to the fossil-based economy. As our state and region work to meet the urgent goals set out in state and federal climate policy, offshore wind energy is an essential resource for driving not only decarbonization but numerous economic benefits. The SouthCoast Wind project will bring thousands of high-quality, family-sustaining jobs to our region and has already made meaningful financial contributions to local initiatives.

But this project isn't just good for communities and the environment – it's good for every Rhode Islander. Increasing the offshore wind energy flowing through our grid will help stabilize electricity prices and reduce the harm from fossil fuel pollution that disproportionately impact low-wealth communities and communities of color. This project also helps safeguard Rhode Islanders against the impacts effects of climate change, including rising temperatures, extreme weather, and environmental degradation that has already posed significant harm to the Ocean State. The entirety of our state is considered coastal by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association and every one of us is jeopardized by our state's continued reliance on fossil energy.



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As we consume energy that was produced out of state, our wallets are impacted too. Harnessing the clean and abundant offshore wind energy resources locally available will create thousands of quality jobs and generate millions of dollars for our local economy. Plus, the cost-saving potential is massive. Dominion, the utility company in Virginia that is building the largest offshore wind company in the US said that if the project had been in operation in 2022 during Winter Storm Elliot, it would have saved customers \$10 million in a single day!¹ The health benefits can also be quantified, with one research study showing that 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind in New England by 2030 would provide \$362 million dollars in annual public health benefit regionally by avoiding 3,700 short tons of nitrogen oxide emissions, 824 tons of sulfur dioxide emissions, and 641 tons of PM2.5 emissions annually.²

To meet the urgent goals of the Act on Climate and redress historic and ongoing injustices, it is essential that we build an equitable and environmentally responsible offshore wind industry in Rhode Island. The transition to a regenerative economy relies on a shift to localized clean energy developed with community involvement and oversight. Fully permitting the SouthCoast Wind Project is an essential step in that direction, and we urge you to issue this permit.

Thank you,

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¹What Can North Carolina Learn from Virginia's Investments in Offshore Wind? *NC Sustainable Energy Association*. Accessed Online: July 16, 2025.

<https://www.energync.org/blog/checking-in-on-the-coastal-virginia-offshore-wind-project-podcast-episode-113/>

² Impacts of Offshore Wind in New England. *Synapse Energy Economics, Inc.* Accessed Online: July 16, 2025.
<https://www.synapse-energy.com/impacts-offshore-wind-new-england>