

## Myths vs. Facts: LBI's Offshore Wind Project

Dear reader,

Much mis-information and half-truths are being communicated regarding the massive wind project planned for the entire coast off LBI. Following is a summary of the recurring 'myths' being propagated by Atlantic Shores (the company planning to build and operate the windfarm) and our corresponding facts. You be the judge...

**Myth 1:** The wind turbines off the coast of LBI will not be visible from our beaches, they will appear as just a 'speck on the horizon.'

**The Facts:** Unless the physics of light transmission and the mathematics of simple geometry have changed recently, the several hundred wind turbines planned for our waters will be clearly visible from our beaches. At 850 feet high, these turbines are as tall as the Eiffel tower. For those of you who prefer a local comparison, they will be much taller than the former Revel Hotel which, at 718 feet, can clearly be seen from our beaches in Holgate regardless of weather or cloud cover. They will be installed starting at 9 miles off the southern end of LBI and 10 miles off our northern end and go out to 20 miles. Even at 20 miles a substantial part of the towers and blades will be visible. **Atlantic Shores intends to populate the entire lease area off LBI with hundreds of the most powerful turbines available, and these turbines will look like a 'wall' of industrial structures permanently marring the beautiful view from our beaches.**

**Myth 2:** Visible offshore wind turbines will not hurt shore economies and actually will be a tourist attraction.

**The Facts:** Your own instincts will tell you this is nonsense, and that is supported by research conducted by two universities in the US. A study by North Carolina State University found that 55 percent of those who previously rented oceanfront or ocean view properties would not return to those properties if turbines were in view, even if a significant discount was offered in the rental price. Another study by the University of Delaware -- which was sponsored by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the agency that oversees offshore wind development -- shows that 18 percent less visits to the shore would occur if turbines were visible from our beaches and other studies show significant losses in shore property values. **While the wind project off Block Island is often used as an example to allay concerns about economic impact, it's important to know that the Block Island project consists of only five smaller turbines which is nothing compared to the hundreds of large turbines LBI will be facing (literally).**

**Myth 3:** Offshore wind will be a boon to the economy and create "thousands" of jobs.

**The Facts:** While that may be true somewhere, it is not true in our case. Many of the jobs from offshore wind are taken by workers in Europe where the turbines are manufactured or by overseas workers who will come here to assemble them, and by out-of-state suppliers. Job estimates from a New Jersey Board of Public Utilities draft plan show 1,432 direct and indirect jobs created from offshore wind for a full 7500-megawatt project when contractors are selected on the basis of lowest cost to keep electric rates lower. That number rises to 4,265 jobs if contractors are selected based on other factors.

The projects currently proposed by Atlantic Shores for the coast of LBI and Orsted for the Ocean Wind project off Ocean City are both about 1000 megawatts. Therefore, the number of new direct and indirect jobs reduce to 191 and 570 for each project. **So, the “thousands “of new jobs promised from each project is a myth.**

In addition, relatively few of those new jobs will end up in New Jersey and the benefits of those will be outweighed by losses in property values, shore tourism revenues and associated local jobs with local businesses and by longer-term economic and job losses from even higher New Jersey electric rates.

**Myth 4:** Wind farms in Europe are highly successful and have not impacted tourism or property values.

**The Facts:** It is true that the modern wind farms overseas have not negatively impacted tourism or property values. **This is because they are located a minimum of 44 miles from shorelines and cannot be seen from their beaches.** In addition, some problems are also cropping up with European offshore wind turbines. For example, new research has shown that turbine performance over the last decade has degraded rapidly over time, at about 4.5 percent per year, especially for the newer and larger wind turbines. This means reduced energy output, higher operating costs and reduced lifetimes. Another study has shown that the likelihood of major outages, lasting at least one month, has increased by at least 10 percent per year.

**Myth 5:** The federal government and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) conducts thorough environmental reviews prior to leasing an offshore site for development.

**The Facts:** The BOEM completed a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) back in 2007 which only reviewed different sources of energy – offshore wind vs. coal vs. natural gas -- in a generic, not area-specific sense. For a specific lease area sale they conduct an environmental assessment on environmentally insignificant site survey activities, such as (explain). **So, to be clear, there has been no environmental assessment of the impact of a wind farm, alternate locations for it, or the installation and operation of wind turbines on the beautiful undersea environment off the coast of LBI, including fish and marine life, as well as commercial and recreational fishing.**

BOEM says they will do a full EIS analysis at the project construction point, but when that point in the process occurs they have historically reneged on that promise.

**Myth 6:** There is only one location off the coast of LBI that has been approved by the federal government for a wind farm.

**The Facts:** There's another area lying further off LBI called the Hudson South call area. It has been screened by the federal agency for all relevant wind energy factors, including visible impact, navigation, fishing conflicts, energy potential and cost of development, and recommended by them for wind energy development. It would avoid the visible impact problems facing the island and it is incomprehensible why it is not being seriously considered by them as an alternative to this project. Our coalition submitted a detailed proposal to BOEM for the Hudson South area, and to date they have not responded.

**Myth 7:** We must wait until the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) makes its determination before we can learn where and how many turbines will be installed, and their size.

**The Facts:** Recently, Atlantic Shores announced its intention to secure a power level agreement with the New Jersey BPU in June. Atlantic Shores is well aware that, by definition, once that power level

agreement is signed, the number, size and proximity of the turbines off LBI will be pre-determined. **Atlantic Shores is intentionally mis-leading us here. They already know the specifics regarding the number of turbines they intend to install, along with their size, location and proximity in the lease area. Instead, different power levels should be assessed in the EIS and a BPU determination on power level should await the final EIS.**

**Myth 8:** We can wait until June or July to learn more about this project and ask questions, as there is ample time to make changes to the proposed project.

**The Facts:** Atlantic Shores has offered to hold public meetings in June and July and provide an opportunity for us to ask questions and provide input. However, **Atlantic Shores knows very well that by June it will be nearly impossible to make any changes to the project.** Again, they are intentionally misleading us.

#### **Conclusion:**

Before this project proceeds, we should fully understand the impact it will have on our environment, and other locations for the project should be considered, including the proposal for the Hudson South Call Area that we have submitted to the BOEM. We should also be confident that this wind project will not be visible from our beaches and will not result in loss of tourism or property values.

Perhaps, as was recommended by the NJ Governor's Blue-Ribbon Panel on the Development of Wind Turbine Facilities in Coastal Waters in 2006, we should start on a much smaller scale before committing now to the massive wind farm that is proposed. This would allow us to gain practical knowledge of the impact and benefit based on real experience with a test project off the coast of New Jersey.

#### **About us:**

As a result of mis-leading information and lack of public awareness regarding the proposed wind farm off LBI, we have formed the 'LBI Coalition for Wind Without Impact.' We are proponents of wind energy who are opposed to the current location, scope and size of this project.

Our coalition includes hundreds of LBI residents, visitors and business owners and is led by Beach Haven resident Dr. Bob Stern, an engineer who previously managed the office in the U.S. Department of Energy that oversaw the protection of the environment as it relates to energy programs and projects.

For more information or to make a contribution to fight this proposed project please contact any of us below.

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On behalf of The LBI Coalition for Wind Without Impact

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