BLUEGREEN ALLIANCE

Offshore Wind:
A Win for Workers, a Win for the Environment

Offshore wind generation has been used for decades in Europe but the technology—while growing at a very quick pace—is comparatively new to the United States. The nation's first offshore wind farm began operation off the coast of Block Island, Rhode Island in 2016. Since then, projects have begun materializing off the Atlantic Coast and efforts to pave the way for floating offshore wind projects on the West Coast and Gulf Coast are following close behind.

This presents us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our country, for our environment, and for workers. **The offshore wind industry in the United States can become a model for building the clean energy economy the right way.**

A MASSIVE OPPORTUNITY

The potential impact of offshore wind on our nation's energy mix is massive. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), if we utilized even 1% of the nation's technical potential offshore wind capacity, we could power nearly 6.5 million homes. Almost 40% of the nation's population lives in coastal areas, and more than half of the United States have ocean or Great Lakes coasts. Additionally, offshore wind energy can contribute to our nation's energy independence and increase power reliability during high energy demand times such as during extremely cold weather.

However, to ensure that the offshore wind industry meets its potential, projects should be developed responsibly, with strong protections in place for coastal and marine wildlife. It is also critical that offshore wind projects are built by skilled workers paid family-sustaining wages and with materials manufactured here in the United States. In this way, we can be sure that the buildout of offshore wind is done responsibly, maximizing benefits for local communities, wildlife, and habitats.

JOB CREATION

The potential impact on job creation that the build out of offshore wind presents is immense when considering the multitude of roles required, including:

- Designing the wind farm;
- Constructing the onshore and offshore substations;
- Laying cable interconnections;
- Erecting the turbines;
- Permitting;
- Manufacturing rotor and nacelle controls, gearboxes, drive trains, generator and power electronics, steel towers, electrical wiring, and advanced polymers and coatings;
- Construction of additional infrastructure like ports; and
- Operations and maintenance.

Job creation thanks to offshore wind development doesn't stop at the coast. Building new turbines creates construction and local manufacturing opportunities near and far from coastal offshore wind projects. The growing offshore wind industry also enables us to invest in building strong domestic supply chains throughout the country for the products and materials needed for these

projects. Taking into consideration the numerous opportunities in the manufacturing supply chain, the benefits of offshore wind deployment can extend throughout the country. As the industry grows, sourcing components domestically represents a significant opportunity to grow U.S. manufacturing.

Up to 58,000 people
could be employed per year by meeting the 30 GW national offshore wind target.

6.5 million homes
could be powered if we utilized 1% of the nation's offshore wind capacity.

$109 billion
buildout of the U.S. offshore wind supply chain to meet the 30 GW goal by 2030.

In fact, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that meeting the nation's 30 gigawatts (GW) national offshore wind target goal by 2030 will employ between 15,000 and 58,000 people per year between 2024 and 2030, depending on how much of the parts and materials for projects are domestically produced. This illustrates just how important it is to bolster domestic supply chains for offshore wind. In fact, NREL **cited global supply chain constraints** as one of the most significant risks in meeting the nation's offshore wind goal. This challenge is also a huge opportunity: One recent **white paper estimated** that getting to the administration's goal of 30 GW of offshore wind deployment by 2030 will require an almost $109 billion buildout of the U.S. offshore wind supply chain. This demands growth in several sectors, including wind turbines and towers, turbine and substation foundations, cables, and substations.

JOB QUALITY

The use of labor standards within the industry is growing, illustrating a clear roadmap for offshore wind developers to follow and ensure that their workforce is the best of the best while also supporting high-quality job growth in local communities.

We've seen widespread use of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for offshore wind construction, which can help achieve a fair return to taxpayers because they often reduce project costs for developers, save public funds in the long run, and increase economic benefits for the local economy. Further, PLAs lead to safer working conditions due to a more skilled and better organized workforce. Data suggests that accidents—including death—are **more common in states with lower union density**.

PLAs can also provide benefits for communities by offering hiring opportunities to historically marginalized communities, including racial minorities, women, and veterans. Targeted hire agreements can also help achieve this goal. We need to require strong labor standards at all phases of offshore wind development to create high-road, union jobs for years to come. Each phase of development can create new jobs including in manufacturing, operations and maintenance, repowering, and decommissioning. Union jobs pay good wages and benefits and give workers a voice in the workplace.

The offshore wind industry can bring massive benefits to communities around the country, but we must ensure the industry is built responsibly from the beginning. State and federal government policies can ensure strong protections for the environment and workers.