



CITY OF BRIGANTINE

Vince Sera

Mayor

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Dear Atlantic County Elected Officials,

The Future of Atlantic County and South Jersey is at great risk with the planned offshore wind projects just 8 miles from our shore. As property values decrease, taxes will increase, electric bills will more than double, and our local economy may fail due to the negative impacts of offshore wind projects and the industrialization of our ocean.

It is time for decisive action to save our Atlantic County way of life that cherishes our pristine beaches and strong economy as well as our stable tax base. Therefore, I'm asking every municipality in the County to pass a resolution in opposition to offshore wind and to encourage our County Executive and County Commissioners to utilize their various powers, including legal action, to protect the future of Atlantic County.

Some people believe these ocean wind projects are "inevitable" and that there's nothing we can do to stop them. I remember when people thought the same thing about North Jersey casinos; saying they too were "inevitable". Thank God for the courage and commitment of one Atlantic County assemblyman who had the strength and willpower to stand up and do what was right for the people of our area.

Today, you are being asked to have the same courage and to stand up and fight for the people of Atlantic County. If we do nothing and our oceans and local economies are destroyed, you will one day need to face your children and your grandchildren and explain to them how you let this happen.

The Murphy and Biden Administrations are moving forward with massive offshore wind projects without knowing and/or properly disclosing the long-term and potentially irreversible damage these projects will have on taxes, property values, the price of electricity, our local economy, and the ocean environment.

My position on the environmental impacts is very well known so I would like to focus this letter on the economic impacts which a number of elected officials have asked me to expand on.

Background:

Offshore wind projects are planned for most of the East Coast and will span from Maine to Florida.

The offshore wind project impacts, as presented by the ocean wind industry, the State, and Federal Government, do not properly demonstrate the true impacts to our area. The information they provide only focuses on the impact of individual projects and does not properly explain the impact of all the projects put together once they are complete and fully operational.

South Jersey will have some of the largest ocean wind projects in the world, and the information that is being provided is based on the impacts of much smaller individual projects and does not represent a true comparison.

Increased Taxes & Loss of Property Value:

Atlantic County is estimated to lose \$9.4 million annually in tax revenue from shore towns which will lose ratables resulting in tax increases for most municipalities.

Based on the impact of an industrialized ocean view from beach homes in Atlantic City, Brigantine, Longport, Margate and Ventnor, the total property values could be reduced on average by 13%, resulting in a \$2.2 billion loss in residential real estate values.

This loss in property values will cause the Atlantic County government to lose an estimated \$9.4 million annually in taxes for their general budget. As the shore town's property values drop, the mainland communities will be forced to pay a larger share of the county taxes. We saw a similar situation with the PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) that was created for the Atlantic City Casinos.

When the casinos were taken out of Atlantic City's ratable base, taxpayers in the County were forced to pay millions more. Imagine how much more the county taxpayers will pay when they need to help cover the \$9.4 million in losses from the shore towns.

Increased Cost of Electricity:

New Jersey Rate Counsel Director Brian Lipman warns that
“Ratepayers simply cannot afford drastically higher electric bills,”

According to the New Jersey Rate Counsel, utility bills in the State could increase dramatically because of offshore wind, but the exact amount is unclear given the lack of transparency surrounding these projects.

It is believed that the ocean wind projects will double or even triple the cost of electricity for all ratepayers in the State.

Right now, the Murphy Administration is moving forward with a plan to allow the ocean wind companies to renegotiate their contracts which will give them the ability to charge even more for the energy they produce.

With the current state of the US economy and major price increases for groceries, fuel, housing, and the general cost of living, that most people are already struggling to deal with, I can't imagine how any median and low income family will be able to afford electricity once these ocean wind projects are constructed.

Job Loss & Harm to Our Economy:

Hundreds of ocean wind turbines, the size of the Empire State Building, located just a few miles off Atlantic City, will destroy our casino industry.

Ocean wind turbines will be constructed between eight and twelve miles off Atlantic City. According to the construction and operation plan for one of the projects, the turbines will be visible for about forty miles and will dramatically change the seascape of the shore communities. They further state that the only way to not see the massive turbines is to turn your back on them.

To contrast this, the ocean wind projects planned for North Jersey are about forty miles out in the ocean which will dramatically minimize the impacts to their shore communities and local economies. The majority of the State's population and largest voter base is in North Jersey so the Governor is never going to put those communities in harm's way. It's very unfortunate that the same consideration and care was not extended to the people of South Jersey.

For decades, many North Jersey politicians have been trying to find a way to take our casinos. Senator Chris Brown fought a courageous battle to stop North Jersey gaming and protect our jobs and the South Jersey economy, but that battle is far from over.

People come to our South Jersey beaches to spend a little time with family and friends, and most of all they want to enjoy our beautiful ocean views. Constructing hundreds of massive wind turbines, just a few miles off the coast, will do nothing more than turn our beautiful shore communities into an industrialized wasteland, killing our tourism industry and providing the leverage these North Jersey politicians need to take our casinos once and for all.

Losing our casino industry would result in thousands of job losses across the county impacting every local business that supplies, supports, and relies on the casinos and the tourism they generate.

Promise of Jobs:

There is no guarantee that American workers will get the majority of jobs promised by the Ocean Wind Industry.

According to an ABC News report, when the ocean wind industry started in England, they made all kinds of grand promises about the many high paying jobs that would be created as a result of these projects. Those jobs never happened.

Once these ocean wind projects are approved, there is no guarantee that the jobs created will go to American workers.

Many elected officials are concerned that if they take a strong stand in opposition to these offshore wind projects that they will hurt our local building trades union members. I can understand and respect that concern.

A number of our building trades members are traveling more and more hours each day in order to find work and provide for their families. Some members are leaving their homes on Monday morning and not returning till Friday night because the work is so far away. So, I can understand why the promise of work in South Jersey, from the ocean wind developers, is so attractive to them.

We as elected officials have to do a better job of creating work here in Atlantic County.

We are all required, by law, to pay prevailing wage, and we should do a better job of making sure our south jersey building trade union members get a fair shot at the construction work we generate in our towns.

Time to Take Action:

The time to take action is now. There are too many unanswered questions about how these ocean wind projects will impact the environment, the economy, and the price of electricity.

The people of South Jersey deserve better!

Respectfully,



Vince Sera
Mayor
City of Brigantine