



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

## **The BlueGreen Alliance Urges Passage of H.R. 5291, the Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act**

June 22, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

As a coalition of the nation's largest labor unions and environmental groups, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, we write to urge the Committee on Natural Resources to favorably report H.R. 5291, the Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act, during the committee's markup scheduled for Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

This important legislation, introduced by Representatives Niki Tsongas (D-MA), Bill Keating (D-MA), and Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), creates a job training grant program aimed at developing or improving educational and career training programs to provide individuals with the skills needed in the offshore wind industry.<sup>1</sup> The program will provide funding for colleges and universities, state and local governments, unions, and nonprofits to create curricula, health and safety programs, and internships that would aid in the development of this new workforce.

America's offshore wind industry is growing, creating quality, family-sustaining jobs and helping to drive the nation's clean energy future. By supporting a wide variety of workforce development strategies targeted at this growing sector, including union training and apprenticeship programs, H.R. 5291 will ensure that workers have access to the skills training they need to take advantage of this emerging industry.

The potential for responsible offshore wind development in the U.S. is substantial. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, if we used even one percent of the nation's technical potential offshore wind capacity, it could power nearly 6.5 million homes. We have the technology to harness wind power off the coasts of at least half of our states, and the industry is expanding both internationally and domestically at a rapid rate. The United States' first offshore wind farm, the Block Island Wind Farm off the coast of Rhode Island, was completed and fully operational by the end of 2016, and is

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<sup>1</sup> "Tsongas, Keating, and Grijalva Introduce Legislation Supporting American Energy Jobs." *Congresswoman Niki Tsongas*: [Home, tsongas.house.gov/press-releases/tsongas-keating-and-grijalva-introduce-legislation-supporting-american-energy-jobs/](http://tsongas.house.gov/press-releases/tsongas-keating-and-grijalva-introduce-legislation-supporting-american-energy-jobs/).

projected to produce more than 125,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year, enough electricity to power 17,000 homes.<sup>2</sup>

Projects like this have tremendous potential to create and sustain quality, union jobs. They rely heavily on advanced manufacturing and skilled labor for construction, installation, operations, and maintenance. The Block Island Wind Farm, for example, created over 300 jobs in Rhode Island alone, for local unionized craftsmen in ten different Building Trades locals working for 30 unionized contractors and subcontractors.<sup>3</sup> This was thanks, in large part, to the Project Labor Agreement (PLA) in place.

This innovative new project, and even bigger projects in development in states like Connecticut<sup>4</sup>, Maryland<sup>5</sup>, Massachusetts<sup>6</sup>, New Jersey<sup>7</sup>, New York<sup>8</sup>, Rhode Island<sup>9</sup>, and Virginia<sup>10</sup>, has the potential to dramatically expand job creation in a relatively untapped sector. As these states lead the way and demonstrate the job-creating capacities of offshore wind, more and more states are likely to follow suit, growing the need for a qualified workforce – not only in the construction of these projects, but in operation and maintenance, manufacturing, and across the offshore wind supply chain.

Estimates put job creation potential off the Atlantic coast alone at between 133,000 and 212,000 per year in the United States.<sup>11</sup> The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) cites that the Atlantic states could create \$200 billion in new economic activity, as well as over 43,000 high-paying, permanent jobs, just by developing 54 gigawatts of their 1,283 gigawatt offshore wind

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<sup>2</sup> “Block Island Wind Farm.” *Deepwater Wind*, [dwwind.com/project/block-island-wind-farm/](http://dwwind.com/project/block-island-wind-farm/).

<sup>3</sup> “The Unifying Appeal of Offshore Wind Power.” *The National Wildlife Federation Blog*, 3 Oct. 2017, [blog.nwf.org/2017/06/the-unifying-appeal-of-offshore-wind-power/](http://blog.nwf.org/2017/06/the-unifying-appeal-of-offshore-wind-power/).

<sup>4</sup> Protection, Department of Environmental. “DEEP: Gov. Malloy and DEEP Announce Selection of 250 MW of Renewable Energy Projects.” *State of Connecticut*, [www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp/A=4965&Q=603300](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp/A=4965&Q=603300).

<sup>5</sup> “Offshore Wind Energy in Maryland.” *Maryland Energy*, [energy.maryland.gov/Pages/Info/renewable/offshorewind.aspx](http://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/Info/renewable/offshorewind.aspx).

<sup>6</sup> “Project Selected to Bring Offshore Wind Energy to the Commonwealth.” *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, [www.mass.gov/news/project-selected-to-bring-offshore-wind-energy-to-the-commonwealth](http://www.mass.gov/news/project-selected-to-bring-offshore-wind-energy-to-the-commonwealth).

<sup>7</sup> “Governor Murphy Signs Measures to Advance New Jersey's Clean Energy Economy.” *State of New Jersey*, [nj.gov/governor/news/news/562018/approved/20180523a\\_cleanEnergy.shtml](http://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562018/approved/20180523a_cleanEnergy.shtml).

<sup>8</sup> “Governor Cuomo Presents 25th Proposal of 2017 State of the State: Nation's Largest Offshore Wind Energy Project Off Long Island Coast and Unprecedented Commitment to Develop up to 2.4 Gigawatts of Offshore Wind Power by 2030.” *State of New York*, 11 Jan. 2017, [www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-presents-25th-proposal-2017-state-state-nations-largest-offshore-wind-energy](http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-presents-25th-proposal-2017-state-state-nations-largest-offshore-wind-energy).

<sup>9</sup> RI.gov. “Rhode Island and Massachusetts Announce Largest Procurement of Offshore Wind in Nation's History.” *State of Rhode Island*, [www.ri.gov/press/view/33287](http://www.ri.gov/press/view/33287).

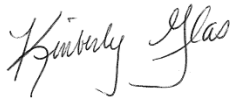
<sup>10</sup> “Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority.” *Energy Incentives*, [www.dmme.virginia.gov/DE/VOWDA2.shtml](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov/DE/VOWDA2.shtml).

<sup>11</sup> Center for American Progress. “Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low-Carbon Economy.” *Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts Amherst*, [http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other\\_publication\\_types/peri\\_report.pdf](http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/peri_report.pdf)

energy potential.<sup>12</sup> In order to truly capture the full benefits and potential of these projects, it is critical that they are built by skilled workers that are paid family-sustaining wages, with Project Labor Agreement's in place, and with materials manufactured here at home.

The offshore wind industry holds great potential for creating quality, family-sustaining jobs while producing clean, renewable energy. As more wind farms spring up off America's coasts, demand for the highly skilled workers needed to complete these innovative projects will grow as well. The Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act will play a significant role in providing the skills needed for workers to break into this growing field. We urge the committee to consider the bill favorably and advance the next step in job creation for this clean energy sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Glas".

Kim Glas  
Executive Director  
BlueGreen Alliance

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<sup>12</sup> National Renewable Energy Laboratory. "Wind Power in the United States: Assessment of Opportunities and Barriers." *National Renewable Energy Laboratory*, Sep. 2010, <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy10osti/40745.pdf>