



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*House of Representatives*  
*State House, Boston 02133-1054*

WILLIAM M. STRAUS  
REPRESENTATIVE  
10TH BRISTOL DISTRICT  
ROOM 134  
TEL. (617) 722-2400

DISTRICT OFFICE  
Tel. (508) 992-1260  
William.Straus@MAhouse.gov

COMMITTEE  
Chairman  
Transportation

October 16, 2024

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Office of Renewable Energy Programs  
45600 Woodland Road  
Mailstop: VAM-OREP  
Sterling, VA 20166

**RE: FSF Comments on Commercial Leasing for Wind Power Development on the Central Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf – Central Atlantic 2 – Call for Information and Nominations; Docket No. BOEM 2024-0040**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Massachusetts State Representative whose legislative district includes both of the communities, New Bedford and Fairhaven, which border on the Port of New Bedford Massachusetts—host to a substantial commercial fishing fleet which harvests sea scallops in the Atlantic.

Because of climate change, the country needs to pursue renewable energy sources, including offshore wind in my view. That process, however, can and must take a balanced approach with sensitivity and awareness of other vital habit and environmental concerns. By comparison, we would not pursue fossil fuel or mineral extraction in unique or vital land areas; similarly, that same concern will also apply to ocean based renewable energy efforts.

I am aware that BOEM has recently issued a Call for Information for new proposed lease areas for offshore wind in the Central Atlantic Bight Area (CAB 2) with comments due by October 21. Please accept this letter with regard to those proposed lease areas.

Although Massachusetts is undertaking substantial efforts to increase the generation of renewable energy from sources including offshore wind, the CAB 2 area is not a part of the offshore wind lease efforts for Massachusetts. However, the New Bedford based scallop fleet often enters this area for harvesting, and the way in which leases and siting efforts are conditioned will be critical to the Port of New Bedford based scallop fleet.

As you probably know, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science has detailed the spatial spread of sea scallops in the affected CAB 2 area in a detailed map analysis. After a two year decline, the area has shown a significant re-population in 2024. As a result, I want to express a cautionary note that the siting of any wind turbines in this area take careful account of the affected habitat and the need for a sustainable scallop biomass.

In my view there will need to be certain exclusion and buffer areas for turbine siting as identified in the VMS analysis. Even as other areas of CAB 2 are permitted though, they would still need to be evaluated regularly over time for any impact to habit and scallop biomass during construction AND operation during any eventual power generation.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.



William M. Straus  
Massachusetts State Representative  
10<sup>th</sup> Bristol District