November 15, 2019

The Honorable Tom Golden
House Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
24 Beacon Street, Room 473B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael Barrett
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
24 Beacon Street, Room 109-D
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Legislation regarding offshore wind energy

Dear Chairman Golden, Chairman Barrett, and members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our thousands of members and supporters across the Commonwealth, we write to express our support for portions of offshore wind energy-related legislation under your consideration. Massachusetts led the nation in 2016 with the passage of An Act relative to energy diversity, establishing the largest offshore wind power commitment to date and sparking a series of large-scale commitments in states across the region. We thank you for your visionary leadership at that time and urge you to keep the Commonwealth at the forefront of this potentially transformative endeavor.

Despite doubling our offshore wind power commitment to 3,200 megawatts (MW) in 2019, Massachusetts now ranks third in scale, behind New York (9,000 MW) and New Jersey (3,500 MW), with both states already moving forward on their first phase of projects. By enacting the measures listed below, the Commonwealth will be on track to advance responsibly developed offshore wind power at a scale more in line with our climate and energy challenges, and will send a clear signal to the offshore wind industry that Massachusetts offers a long-term market opportunity.

To unleash the environmental and economic benefits of offshore wind power:

- Massachusetts should increase its offshore wind power goal by 2,800 MW, to a total of 6,000 MW – enough to power three million homes – as proposed in H.2802, S.2005, and S.2010;
- Offshore wind project solicitations should occur at a minimum of once every 12 months, as proposed in H.2867;
- Massachusetts should work with all New England states to consider the potential for an additional 6,000 MW regional procurement, as proposed in H.2920; and
- The procurement process should be made more transparent by addressing and seeking to eliminate the influence that is enabled by the corporate relationships between bidders and those evaluating and selecting bids, as proposed in H.2922.

In addition to the specific provisions detailed above, we urge you to consider strengthening the Commonwealth’s attention to ensuring that as offshore wind power develops, strong environmental protections and labor requirements are in place every step of the way. Specifically, it is critical that all projects:
• Demonstrate a commitment to employing best management practices as informed by the latest science, to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wildlife and natural resources; and
• Achieve high-quality employment by utilizing project labor agreements for construction, committing to procure domestic content to establish and build the local supply chain, and reaching community benefits agreements designed with organized labor and local community organizations that include local hiring.

If incorporated in full, these measures will position Massachusetts to launch a vibrant, enduring, and responsible offshore wind power industry. An investment at this scale and pace will result in significant progress toward the Commonwealth’s emission-reduction requirements, create thousands of long-term, high-quality jobs, and finally seize the untapped and inexhaustible clean energy opportunity off our shores.

We appreciate your leadership and your attention to offshore wind power to date, and we look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to ensure we maintain momentum toward the clean energy future within reach.

Sincerely,

Amber Hewett
National Wildlife Federation

Jack Clarke
Mass Audubon

Caitlin Peale Sloan
Conservation Law Foundation

Craig S. Altemose
350 Massachusetts

Deb Pasternak
David Zeek
Sierra Club Massachusetts

Claire Miller
Toxics Action Center Campaigns

Nicole Morris-McLaughlin
Southcoast Energy Challenge

Rosemary Wessel
No Fracked Gas in Mass

Megan Amsler
Self-Reliance Corporation

James O. Michel
Boston Clean Energy Coalition

Eric Wilkinson
Environmental League of Massachusetts

John Rogers
Union of Concerned Scientists

Hillary Bright
BlueGreen Alliance

Don Keeran
Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Susan Helms Daley
Mothers Out Front

Jane Winn
Berkshire Environmental Action Team

Patricia A. Gozemba
Cindy Keegan
SAFE (Salem Alliance for the Environment)

Birgitta McAlevey
No Sharon Gas Pipeline | Clean Energy Now

Jennifer Wexler
Canton Residents for a Sustainable, Equitable Future
Jenny Daniell  
Climate Action Now

Ben Hellerstein  
Environment Massachusetts

Rick Lent  
Elders Climate Action

Elizabeth Saunders  
Clean Water Action

Deborah Donovan  
Acadia Center