

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

Offshore Wind for North Carolina (OSW4NC) coalition partners share a common goal of ensuring that offshore wind is developed in an environmentally responsible manner. Offshore wind is an important tool to help mitigate the harmful effects of carbon pollution on natural systems and wildlife. Through compliance with existing state and federal environmental laws, proper siting, robust monitoring and mitigation, and use of best available science and technology, North Carolina can help ensure responsible offshore wind projects.

KEY GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT FOR NORTH CAROLINA INCLUDE:

Compliance with Federal & State Statutory Obligations.

To ensure that individual wind projects are properly vetted to withstand legal challenges and to reduce potential for unwarranted delays, it is critical that the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and state agencies achieve full compliance with all applicable environmental and wildlife protection laws. A robust and inclusive regulatory planning and review process for identification of wind energy areas and approval of individual wind areas should include early outreach and engagement with affected stakeholders.

Technical Guidance. It is important for states to establish an ongoing venue for environmental, wildlife, academic, industry, and agency partners to share the best available scientific and technological data to ensure science-based and stakeholder-informed decision-making. Leading states have established technical wind working groups to serve as a venue for this work. Key findings help inform state and federal regulatory review of wind energy areas and projects, siting decisions, monitoring strategies, and use of emerging technology.

Proper Siting. Informed by best available science and traditional knowledge, projects should be sited in areas that have the fewest potential impacts on wildlife including locating wind projects outside of migratory pathways, high-quality habitat, and areas of relatively high wildlife abundance.

Robust Monitoring & Mitigation. Data collection and ongoing monitoring of wind projects to accurately assess impacts on wildlife before, during, and after construction and during operation is critical to ensure that developers and regulators have up to date information needed to support siting, design and operation of wind turbines; inform mitigation measures; and expand the knowledge base for future projects. Adopting strong environmental mitigation measures and adaptive management to protect endangered and threatened wildlife and vulnerable habitats will ensure our offshore wind future is built with confidence. As climate change disrupts habitat, food sources, weather patterns and migratory behavior of wildlife species, ongoing monitoring of wind projects and potential impacts on wildlife is more important than ever before.

Best Available Technology. Use of emerging technology to document and minimize collisions with (and other impacts from) wind turbines are an important component of responsible wind development. Originally developed for land-based wind projects, strike detection technology, smart curtailment, visual and audio deterrents, and other technology innovations should be tested at offshore wind locations to help prevent bird and bat collisions. Quieter foundation types and noise reduction and attenuation technologies help avoid or minimize the impacts of pile driving noise. Use of best available technology also helps protect wind developers from violating federal wildlife protection laws.