

April 11, 2018

His Excellency Charles D. Baker, Jr.
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Comments Regarding the Offshore Wind 83C Solicitation

Dear Governor Baker:

Community and political leaders in New Bedford have been champions of offshore wind for more than a decade. We have studied its European origins closely and have seen first hand the potential for a new American clean energy industry from which our historic industrial port could be a national epicenter.

We have taken great care and pride in crafting future plans for our port—the City’s greatest economic asset—in such a way that the commercial fishing, processing, cargo, and supporting service interests are protected, aligned, and even strengthened, as industrial scale offshore wind projects stage and operate from our bustling waterfront.

Many of these leaders are members of a working group that initially came together in March of 2014 when Mayor Mitchell asked many of the region’s business and community leaders to articulate a strategy for the City’s economic regeneration that builds on the committee’s collective experience in leading successful enterprises. The committee’s final report, *Uniting in Pursuit of Growth and Opportunity*, is a statement that was intended to attract broad popular buy-in, shape economic development strategy over a five-year period, and signal to both private investors and government officials outside the region that New Bedford has a clear set of objectives. One of the reports main strategies was modernizing and driving growth in our greatest asset—the Port of New Bedford. This group is now a standing committee of the New Bedford Economic Development Council, has grown in numbers and diversity of membership, and has closely followed the progress of the emerging offshore wind industry for Massachusetts and the competing east coast states.

Because of the leadership and hard work of many, we firmly believe that New Bedford and this region of the Commonwealth will become the central cluster of offshore wind for the east coast that includes all major facets of the industry such as port services, construction, training, research, engineering, and manufacturing. As such we invited each of the three developers proposing projects in the 83C solicitation to present at our March meeting so we could learn a bit more about the details of each proposal prior to the May selection. This in-person opportunity was our first real chance to engage in any formal way with each of the three development teams. While it was exciting to see that the jobs and private sector investment born from offshore wind are closer than ever, we must express the strong universal believe of our members— industrial scale offshore wind must be developed in such a way that it “fits in” to the already strong and vibrant life of the port of New Bedford and the nation’s commercial fishing industry.

Many of us were in the room for your recent talk at the Chamber of Commerce dinner in Westport, and were encouraged to hear you so clearly state that the commercial fishing industry would not be forgotten as the 83C project selection process moves forward. As such, all steps must be taken to avoid or mitigate the negative implications that proposed projects of such massive scale can have on the shared waters of the Atlantic. There are five main points we wish to stress for consideration in the section process:

1. The size of the first project should not be so large as to exacerbate unintended consequences in terms of negative impacts to commercial fishing and other ongoing maritime trades. We urge that the mid-range of 400mw be chosen for the first round of projects, given that the three developers have proposed this scale as an option. This scale project will be able to provide competitive energy pricing, produce significant economic activity, and allow for the study of impacts in all project phases.

2. Project development details and construction must be fully aligned and responsive to the concerns of commercial fishing. We understand that there will be a host of government agencies and stakeholders that are part of the process from award to completion, but we are in full support of the standardized process for developer engagement with fishing stakeholders, with the New Bedford Port Authority serving as the central facilitator.

3. Project proposals should be seen as catalysts for the redevelopment of identified underused sites on the waterfront (i.e. EverSource/Sprague, Revere Copper) as a means to spur lasting economic impact beyond the deployment from the Marine Commerce Terminal.

The City, its partners, and waterfront stakeholders have undertaken detailed and thoughtful land-use planning for the entire waterfront and know that there are real opportunities for creative partnerships and use profiles for critical sites that can bring fallow brown fields back as economic drivers with regional impacts. Such development can and should occur in ways that do not disrupt the fishing, cargo, and ferry uses of the central waterfront.

4. Projects shall create the maximum number of jobs for greater New Bedford—now and in the future—in a way that enhances our port operations. This is accomplished by working in partnerships to maximize deployment activities, operations & maintenance, supporting construction, and maritime services. There is also the ability to be a national leader in workforce development by establishing an offshore wind training center in the port that brings higher education, private sector, and labor union partners together for the betterment of an entirely new generation of skilled maritime workers.

5. Developers should be good corporate citizens. Ensuring good corporate citizenship is not merely a “nice to have” aspect of being part of a community, but rather a responsibility that should be embraced and celebrated. Offshore wind is of such a scale that it can bring a renewed sense of civic pride to the city and the region that could certainly benefit from something to cheer for. Developers should be thinking about their legacy in our community for decades to come, and the positive impacts all enjoy from their corporate success.

New Bedford and the Commonwealth are national leaders in the blue and green economies, and even positive changes to how things are done can often be worrisome. Certainly, bringing a new renewable and cost effective energy supply source to the Commonwealth is a noble effort that we fully support, but it must be executed in a way that does no harm to those working so hard every day in our port and on the waters off of our coast.

We know that you and the members of your administration feel the same, and we ask that you continue your thoughtful approach as the process continues. We do believe that doing the work is what is most important to building strong communities, cities, and a Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Gerry Kavanaugh, Co-Chair
President LStar Investments
LStar Ventures

Anthony Sapienza, Co-Chair
JA Apparel Corp.
President New Bedford EDC