

NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

March 2, 2023

Committee | Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony | SB0781 Offshore Wind Energy – State Goals and Procurement (Promoting Offshore Wind Resources Energy Act – The POWER Act)

Position | Favorable

Hearing Date | March 7, 2023

Dear Chairman Feldman and Distinguished Committee Members,

I am Staci Hartwell chair of the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee of the NAACP Maryland State Conference. I am writing on behalf of the Maryland State Conference in support of SB0781, which requires the state to set an 8.5 GW goal for offshore wind, coordinate transmission planning which will support connecting offshore wind to the grid, and fully build out all current offshore wind lease areas.

This legislation is a meaningful step toward addressing one of the most insidious, entrenched, and sinister forms of systemic racism: the use of fossil fuel energy. The climate harms, such as increased flooding and excessive heat, are concentrated in vulnerable communities leaving Black and Brown people to experience these impacts most potently and leaving us with the least ability to adjust to these untenable conditions.

Further, across Maryland, Black and Brown communities disproportionately suffer from the local pollutants and other environmental injustices associated with dirty energy. In Baltimore, a city that is 65% Black, as many as 130 residents per 100,000 die every year from the consequences of air pollution.¹

We, at the NAACP, are firmly in support of this legislation not only because of its momentum towards ridding the state of dirty, fossil fuel energy, but also because of the positive economic impact it will have for our communities. US Wind and Orsted are poised to make historic investments in and around Sparrows Point. Further, the offshore wind industry has the potential to become an economic driver for communities of color. Both current offshore wind developers have committed to small, minority, and women-owned business participation goals of 15% (US Wind) and 29% (Orsted) during project development. US Wind has been honored by

¹<https://grist.org/business-technology/baltimore-youth-of-color-are-still-fighting-plans-for-gigantic-garbage-incinerator/>

the Maryland Minority Contractors Association with a Best Practice Award for its commitment to Minority Business Enterprises.²

Increasing Maryland's share of clean, wind energy will have positive economic and environmental impacts for communities across the state. We must prioritize the swift transition to a clean energy economy and this legislation is a positive step in that direction.

We request a favorable report on SB0781.

Respectfully submitted,



Staci Hartwell, Chair
Environmental and Climate Justice Committee
NAACP Maryland State Conference

8775 Cloudleap Court, Suite 200
Columbia, Maryland 21045
action@naacpmdecj.org
Phone: 410-835-1463

² <https://uswindinc.com/us-wind-honored-by-the-maryland-minority-contractors-association/>