



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · June 14, 2021

Office of the Governor

Alena.Yarmosky@governor.virginia.gov

Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Tarah.Kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov

**Governor Northam Announces Virginia's
Offshore Wind Project Among the First in the
Nation to Use New Federal Permitting
Initiative**

*~ Old Dominion University helped develop expanded review process that
aims to accelerate offshore wind development ~*

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia Offshore Wind project will be among the first in the nation to use a new federal permitting process designed to accelerate offshore wind development in the United States. This comes as the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management (BOEM)

and the North Atlantic Division of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) [announced a new agreement](#) that will give the agencies additional scientific and technical resources to evaluate offshore wind projects. The initiative, which was developed in partnership with Old Dominion University and facilitated by the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, will be critical to ensuring new offshore wind leases are approved in a timely manner.

“Innovative partnerships like this signal to the world that Virginia and the Southeast are prepared to lead the clean energy economy,” **said Governor Northam**. “With offshore wind, we have a unique opportunity to address the climate crisis while creating new jobs and driving economic growth. I am thrilled that the Commonwealth could help provide a solution to improve the federal permitting process for offshore wind development and ensure this industry is able to truly take off.”

While the agreement covers all renewable energy activities along the Atlantic Coast, the initial focus will be on the review of the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project and the Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind project in North Carolina. This partnership is critical to the success of the offshore wind industry in the United States, allowing USACE to immediately provide technical support to BOEM to facilitate federal reviews and assist in decision making on the growing number of offshore wind projects. This additional capacity will allow BOEM to focus on a broader range of challenges, including the development of additional offshore wind leases that will offer additional market opportunity and help secure the supply chain needed to reach renewable energy targets.

“Virginia has an opportunity to be a national leader in offshore wind production, which will power hundreds of thousands of homes in the Commonwealth while creating tens of thousands of jobs,” **said U.S. Senator Mark R. Warner**. “I am excited by the announcement between the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Army Corps of Engineers, and Commonwealth of Virginia that will help streamline the permitting process for Virginia’s Commercial Offshore Wind project and potentially serve as a model for other future offshore wind projects in Virginia and across the nation.”

“In March, Senator Warner, Congresswoman Luria, and I [pressed the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management](#) on bottlenecks in the permitting process that hurt our offshore wind industry,” **said U.S. Senator Tim Kaine**. “I am encouraged to see BOEM is speeding up the process. This is a critical step forward to advance renewable energy in the Commonwealth and move toward a future that’s greener tomorrow than it is today.”

“With tens of thousands of jobs at stake, we need all hands-on-deck to get this done for Virginia,” **said Congresswoman Elaine Luria**, who launched the [Congressional Offshore Wind Caucus](#) in March. “I’m grateful to Governor Northam for bringing together the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

to expedite the permitting process, and I'm proud to stand with our Virginia Senators to help get this project over the finish line."

The permitting initiative was developed by retired Colonel Paul Olsen, a former USACE Norfolk District Commander who serves as the Executive Director of Programs and Partnerships in the Office of Research at Old Dominion University. His concept employs a seldom-used federal authority that allows the USACE to provide interagency assistance for critical infrastructure projects.

"Virginia is blessed with an abundance of retired military leaders and thinkers," **said Olsen**. "This is a great example of how we can put our federal experience to work to benefit the Commonwealth and our nation."

Last year, Governor Northam [signed landmark offshore wind legislation](#) that established a target for Virginia to generate 5,200 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2034, providing a path for the development of at least two offshore wind projects that are currently planned to interconnect into Virginia.

The Commonwealth has partnered with many states along the East Coast to encourage policy and practices that will demonstrate that the United States is open for offshore wind development. In May, Virginia was one of nine states that sent a [letter to President Biden](#) encouraging the Biden-Harris Administration to continue prioritizing offshore wind.