



## NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

National Advocacy Center  
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June 22, 2011

Dear Member of the House Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee,

On behalf of our four million members and supporters, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) greatly appreciates the Committee's interest in promoting much-needed U.S. offshore wind generation, but we oppose the recently proposed "Cutting Federal Red Tape to Facilitate Renewable Energy Act" (H.R. 2170) and "Advancing Offshore Wind Production Act" (H.R. 2173).

NWF recognizes that climate change is the single greatest threat facing both wildlife and people across the globe and has called for a rapid transition to clean energy sources that do not emit greenhouse gas emissions. There are nearly 1,000 offshore wind turbines producing local, clean energy overseas and not one spinning here in the Atlantic. If America is to get serious about transitioning to clean energy, this has to change. According to the federal government there is as much as 212 GW of offshore wind power available in shallow waters off our East Coast alone. Harnessing a fraction of the Atlantic Ocean offshore wind potential could power our homes, businesses, and vehicles with job-producing clean energy. We can no longer afford to ignore this immense local energy source.

At the Committee's first round of hearings on this topic in May, it was clear from the testimony that it is not the environmental review process that is holding up development of offshore wind and other large-scale renewable energy in America. The primary obstacles are inadequate and inconsistent federal investment in key financial incentive programs, the status of national and regional markets for renewable power, and big budget cuts to state and federal programs needed to avoid conflicts in project permitting. NWF believes Congress should act to help facilitate offshore wind and other large-scale renewable energy development by addressing these critical issues.

HR 2170 and HR 2173 will not be effective in helping launch a major job-producing offshore wind energy industry in America. Limiting, or exempting all together, environmental review of meteorological towers, buoys, and projects will not help speed offshore wind development and in fact will likely slow it down. These bills would cut off a key component of the process that is needed to identify siting conflicts. It is crucial that the public and key stakeholders have an adequate opportunity to engage in the process early and comment on where, how, and when offshore wind development activities will occur in order to reduce opposition in the long run by guiding projects to places of least conflict.

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The concept of the “Advancing Offshore Wind Production Act” (H.R. 2173), expediting actions with minimal impact, is something NWF does support for offshore wind. This is the central goal of the Obama Administration’s Smart from the Start Program which has lead to a marked acceleration of the permitting process. The Administration has sufficient authority under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to streamline review for actions that will have minimal or no significant impact, and we will continue to encourage them to do so where appropriate. Offshore wind projects can be permitted efficiently within the existing NEPA framework.

In conclusion, NWF agrees with bill sponsors, Representatives Wittman and Hastings, that offshore wind is an important domestic energy source with tremendous job creation potential. While these bills are not the right approach, we look forward to working with the Committee to craft solutions that can actually speed deployment of wildlife-friendly offshore wind so that America can finally take advantage of this clean energy source just sitting off our shores.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Schweiger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry Schweiger  
President & CEO