

# Gov. Baker Applauds Federal Approval of Vineyard Wind Project

The Baker-Polito Administration today applauded the Record of Decision issued by the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) granting approval to the Vineyard Wind project and concluding environmental review of the project through the National Environmental Policy Act. The key federal permitting approval allows Vineyard Wind to advance its Construction and Operations Plan to bring 800 Megawatts of cost-effective, renewable offshore wind power to Massachusetts ratepayers, enough energy to power 400,000 homes. Following the announcement, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides will join Vineyard Wind CEO Lars Pedersen at the Wind Technology Testing Center in Charlestown to celebrate the decision.

“Massachusetts should be proud that this decision launches the nation’s first commercial-scale offshore wind project on the Commonwealth’s shores,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “This groundbreaking project will produce affordable, renewable energy, create jobs and prove Massachusetts developed a successful model for developing offshore wind energy. We appreciate the federal government’s partnership to grant this approval and look forward to working with Vineyard Wind to create thousands of jobs and set the Commonwealth on a path to achieve Net Zero emissions.”

“Offshore wind represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for communities across Massachusetts, especially in the South Coast region, to pioneer this new clean energy industry in the U.S.,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “Building this new industry will bring new jobs and economic development to cities and towns in the Commonwealth, while providing a

significant clean energy resource that will save ratepayers money while helping to meet our ambitious climate goals.”

Through a competitive procurement process established in comprehensive energy legislation signed by Governor Baker in 2016, the Vineyard Wind project was selected in May 2018 to provide 800 MW of cost-effective renewable offshore wind power to Massachusetts. Following the selection of the Vineyard Wind project, a second competitive procurement process resulted in the selection of the Mayflower Wind project in October 2019. Together the two projects represent major steps in meeting the state’s greenhouse gas emission reduction mandates and growing the Commonwealth’s clean energy economy.

“Offshore wind is critical to meeting Massachusetts’ nation-leading commitment to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2050, and today’s decision by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is a monumental step in our shared effort to take on the generational challenge of climate change,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “With this key federal approval, the Vineyard Wind project is positioned to break ground as the first commercial-scale offshore wind project in the U.S., and the Baker-Polito Administration will continue to build on its national climate leadership by ensuring that all residents benefit from the affordable clean energy and economic opportunities offered by this new American industry.”

“Today’s Record of Decision is not about the start of a single project, but the launch of a new industry,” said Vineyard Wind CEO Lars T. Pedersen. “Receiving this final federal approval means the jobs, economic benefits and clean energy revolution that have been long talked about can finally come to fruition. It’s been a long road to get to this point, but ultimately, we are reaching the end of this process with the strongest possible project. I want to thank BOEM, the Department of Interior and the Biden Administration for their efforts in finalizing the review of this project. I also want to thank

Governor Baker, the Massachusetts federal delegation and State Legislature for their steadfast commitment to seeing this endeavor through to today. And of course, I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to all our supporters and stakeholders for all of their work, input and dedication. We could not have reached this milestone without you.”

The 800 MW Vineyard Wind project will utilize 62 GE Haliade-X turbines, currently the world’s most powerful turbine with a capacity of 13 MW per machine utilizing wind blades spanning 107 meters. In November 2019, GE shipped a 107 meter Haliade-X blade to the Wind Technology Testing Center – the only facility of its kind in North America – for stress and durability testing that validated the technology can withstand more than 25 years of operation at sea, a key part of the technology development process.

“Cost-effective offshore wind energy plays a pivotal role in advancing the Commonwealth’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote economic development, and ultimately meet our ambitious long-term climate goals,” said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Patrick Woodcock. “Today’s decision from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management marks a historic day for the country and Massachusetts and is the testament of the hard work of state and federal agencies over nearly a decade. Our leadership in offshore wind has established a new industry in the United States that has the opportunity to reduce emissions, boost our economy, and lower energy costs for our residents and businesses.”

“On behalf of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, I would like to congratulate Lars Pedersen and the entire Vineyard Wind team for today’s major milestone,” said Steve Pike, CEO of MassCEC. “We look forward to hosting Vineyard Wind at the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal and continuing our mutual efforts to advance workforce and supply chain development as well as science, research and innovation for the Nation’s first commercial offshore wind farm.”

The Record of Decision concludes NEPA review by BOEM, outlining along with its final decision an approval of the project's mitigation package. In response to extensive stakeholder engagement, including with the Massachusetts Fisheries Working Group, the Massachusetts Habitat Working Group, and other state and local entities, Vineyard Wind has agreed to provide millions of dollars to compensate Massachusetts and Rhode Island fishermen for potential loss of revenue and lost gear, and to enhance their ability to fish in and around the lease area. Vineyard Wind has also committed to continue funding pre- and-post construction survey studies with the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) and the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA) to measure any impacts to the marine environment.

To ensure that the project is developed in an environmentally responsible manner that protects and preserves marine wildlife, including the critically endangered North American Right Whale, Vineyard Wind will invest millions of dollars to develop and deploy innovative technologies and undertake scientific research to further safeguard marine mammals; institute comprehensive monitoring protocols to ensure that construction doesn't take place when right whales are near the lease area; utilize acoustic monitoring technology throughout construction including in transit corridors, and employ trained protective species observers to spot right whales visually during transit and foundation installation.

In August 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the signing of lease agreements with Vineyard Wind and Mayflower Wind to utilize the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal as the primary staging and deployment base for the construction and installation of their offshore wind projects located in federal waters south of Martha's Vineyard. The lease agreements commit the facility to full-time offshore wind work from 2023 into 2027 and are worth more than \$32.5 million.

Constructed and operated by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal is a 29-acre heavy-lift facility and the first port in North America specifically purpose-built to support the staging and installation of offshore wind components.

On March 26, 2021, Governor Baker signed comprehensive climate change legislation that increased the Administration's authorization to solicit an additional 2,400 Megawatts of offshore wind, bringing the state's total commitment to 5,600 Megawatts. On December 30, 2020, the Administration released two reports – the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap Report and an interim 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan (CECP) – that detail policies and strategies to equitably and cost-effectively reduce emissions and combat climate change. The 2050 Roadmap found that the most cost-effective, low-risk pathways to Net Zero share core elements, including a balanced clean energy portfolio anchored by a significant offshore wind resource, more interstate transmission, and widespread electrification of transportation and building heat.

On May 7, 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration, in the third round of its offshore wind solicitation process, issued a Request for Proposals seeking up to 1,600 Megawatts of affordable, resilient clean energy. Bids are due on September 17, 2021, and a selection of project(s) will be announced by December 17, 2021.