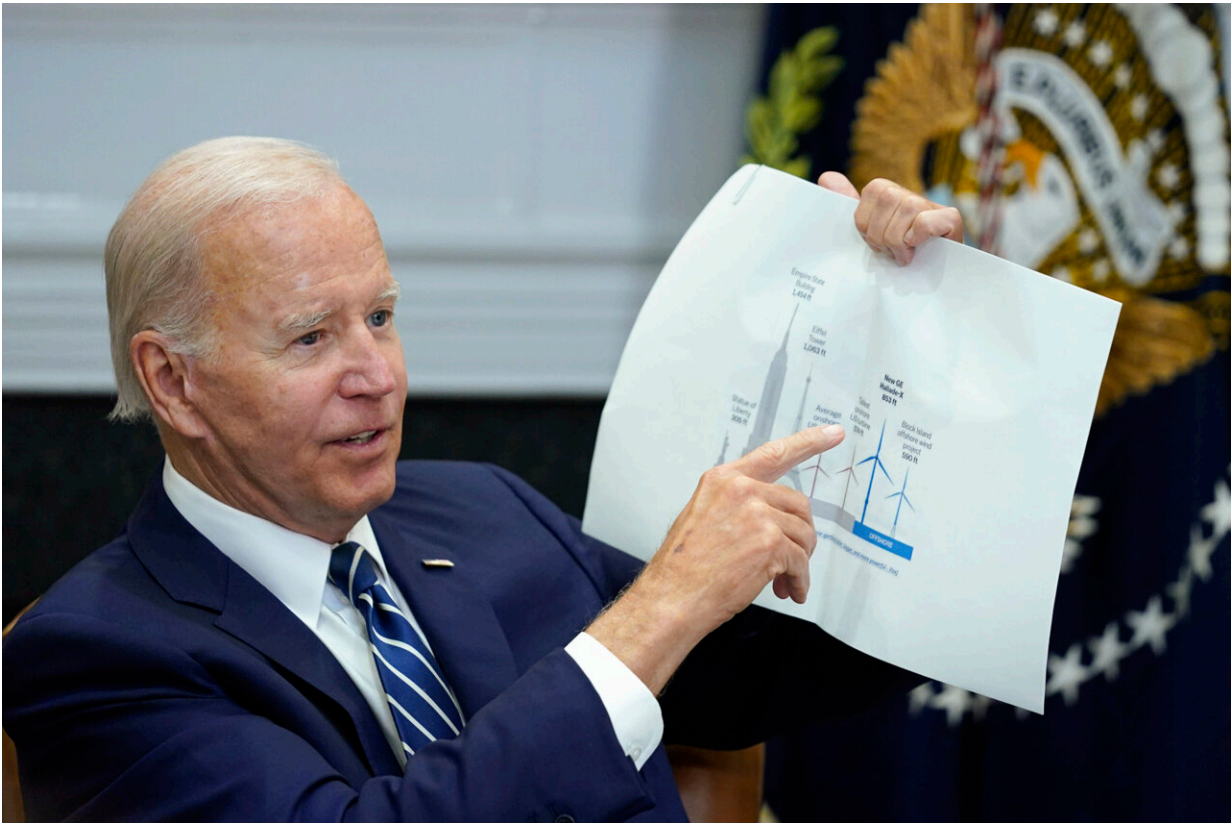


Biden plans floating platforms to expand offshore wind power

September 15 2022, by MATTHEW DALY and JENNIFER McDERMOTT



President Joe Biden shows a wind turbine size comparison chart during a meeting in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, June 23, 2022, with governors, labor leaders, and private companies launching the Federal-State Offshore Wind Implementation Partnership. The Biden administration says it will hold its first offshore wind auction next month. It's offering nearly 500,000 acres off the coast of New York and New Jersey for wind energy projects that could produce enough electricity to power nearly 2 million homes.

Credit: AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File

The Biden administration on Thursday announced plans to develop floating platforms in the deep ocean for wind towers that could power millions of homes and vastly expand offshore wind in the United States.

The plan would target sites in the Pacific Ocean off the California and Oregon coasts, as well as in the Atlantic in the Gulf of Maine.

President Joe Biden hopes to deploy up to 15 gigawatts of electricity through floating sites by 2035, enough to power 5 million homes. The administration has previously set a goal of 30 GW of offshore wind by 2030 using traditional technology that secures [wind turbines](#) to the [ocean floor](#).

There are only a handful of floating [offshore platforms](#) in the world—all in Europe—but officials said the technology is developing and could soon establish the United States as a global leader in offshore wind.

The push for offshore wind is part of Biden's effort to promote clean energy and address global warming. Biden has pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. A climate-and-tax bill he signed last month would spend about \$375 billion over 10 years to boost electric vehicles, jump-start renewable energy such as solar and [wind power](#) and develop [alternative energy sources](#) like hydrogen.

"Today we're launching efforts to seize a new opportunity—floating offshore wind—which will let us build in deep water areas where turbines can't be secured directly to the sea floor, but where there are [strong winds](#) that we can now harness," White House climate adviser Gina McCarthy said at a news conference Thursday.

Deepwater areas in the Pacific especially have potential to vastly expand [offshore wind energy](#) in the U.S., McCarthy and other officials said.

McCarthy acknowledged that the floating technology is at an early stage. But she said "coordinated actions" by federal and [state officials](#), working with the private sector, can position the U.S. "to lead the world on floating offshore wind and bring offshore wind jobs to more parts of our country, including the West Coast."

Two pilot projects are planned off the north and central California coast, and a third is planned in southern Oregon, officials said.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said her state and California have some of the best wind resources in the world, but called floating platforms crucial to develop them due to the depth of the ocean floor along the West Coast.

Heather Zichal, CEO of the American Clean Power Association, an industry group, called the announcement a "game changer" that will spark investment in a new domestic supply chain and allow the U.S. to lead in this emerging technology. Along with incentives in the sweeping climate-and-tax bill, Zichal said she expects costs for offshore wind development to dramatically decrease, allowing deployment of clean energy at the scale needed to take action to address [climate change](#).



Offshore wind turbines stand near Block Island, R.I. on Aug. 15, 2016. The Biden administration says it will hold its first offshore wind auction next month. It's offering nearly 500,000 acres off the coast of New York and New Jersey for wind energy projects that could produce enough electricity to power nearly 2 million homes. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File

The Energy Department announced nearly \$50 million, including funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law Biden signed last year, for research, development and demonstration work to support floating offshore wind platforms. Officials aim to cut the cost of floating offshore wind energy 70% by 2035, to \$45 per megawatt hour, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said.

"We think the [private sector](#) is going to quickly see the real opportunity

here not only to triple the country's accessible offshore wind resources but to make the U.S. a global leader in manufacturing and deploying offshore wind," she said.

Emerging technology for floating platforms "means there's real opportunity for greater energy security," affordability "and course tens of thousands of good-paying in-demand jobs," such as electricians, engineers, ship builders and stevedores, Granholm said.

The Biden administration "is all-in on making floating offshore wind a real part of our of our energy mix and winning the global race to lead in this space," Granholm said. "And that's why we set this big, hairy audacious goal" of 15 gigawatts of floating offshore wind by 2035.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said her department has approved the nation's first two major offshore wind projects in federal waters and has begun reviewing at least 10 more. An offshore wind lease sale off the New York and New Jersey coast set new records, she said, and a lease sale also was held in North Carolina. Seven lease sales for offshore wind projects are planned by 2025.

More than half of the nation's offshore wind resources are in deep waters where traditional offshore wind foundations are not economically feasible, Haaland said, adding that "floating wind will help us reach areas once not attainable. And this is critical because floating wind will help us build on the administration's goal of 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030."

The world's first floating wind farm has been operating off Scotland's coast since 2017. Norway-based Equinor, which operates the 30-megawatt Hywind Scotland project, is currently building a huge, floating offshore wind farm off Norway to provide electricity for offshore oil and gas fields.

Lauren Shane, a spokeswoman for Equinor in the United States, said the company is upbeat about floating offshore wind and will evaluate possible opportunities in the U.S. "We're excited about the development of offshore wind in the U.S.," she said.

Another [offshore wind](#) developer with projects in the United States, Denmark-based Ørsted, also applauded the administration's efforts.

"The administration's innovation priority is well-placed, and with the right investment and public-private partnerships," floating platforms "can expand deployment, drive down costs and bring more [clean energy](#) to millions of Americans," said Bryan Stockton, head of regulatory affairs for Ørsted North America.

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