

Feds approve offshore wind farm south of Rhode Island and Martha's Vineyard

August 23 2023, by STEVE LeBLANC



Three wind turbines from Deepwater Wind stand in the water off Block Island, R.I., the nation's first offshore wind farm, Aug. 15, 2016. Another planned offshore wind farm, by Revolution Wind, moved a step closer to construction on Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2023, with the Department of the Interior announcing it has approved the project, to be located in federal waters about 15 miles southeast of Point Judith, R.I., and south of Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File

A planned offshore wind farm moved a step closer to construction Tuesday with the Department of the Interior announcing it has approved the project, to be located in federal waters near Rhode Island south of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

The Revolution Wind project will have an estimated capacity of more than 700 megawatts of renewable energy, capable of powering nearly 250,000 homes, and is expected to create about 1,200 jobs during construction, regulators said.

It's the department's fourth approval of a commercial-scale, offshore wind energy project, joining the Vineyard Wind project off Massachusetts, the South Fork Wind project off Rhode Island and New York, and the Ocean Wind 1 project off New Jersey.

The Revolution Wind project is another step toward the Biden administration's goal of developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy capacity by 2030, said U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

"Together with industry, labor and partners from coast to coast, we are building an entirely new industry off the east and west and Gulf coasts," Haaland said in a statement.

The final version of the plan approved by the department calls for installing fewer turbines than originally proposed by the developer. The goal is to help reduce impacts to visual resources, the ocean floor habitat, and other ocean activities.

The plan identifies possible locations for the installation of 65 [wind turbines](#) and two offshore substations.

Revolution Wind will create a fund to compensate for losses by recreational and commercial fisheries in Rhode Island and

Massachusetts—as well as fisheries from other states—directly related to the construction of the turbines.

The project will also take steps to reduce potential harm to protected species like marine mammals, sea turtles, and Atlantic sturgeon.

The Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management remains on track to complete reviews of at least 16 offshore [wind](#) project plans by 2025, representing more than 27 gigawatts of clean energy, the bureau said.

Vineyard Wind, a separate project, is under construction 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. It includes 62 turbines and is expected to put out 800 megawatts, enough electricity to power more than 400,000 homes, beginning this year.

The first U.S. [offshore wind farm](#) opened off Rhode Island's Block Island in late 2016. But with five turbines, it's not commercial scale.

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