

Senator Bob Andrzejczak
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Chairman Grijalva, Congressman Van Drew, Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Bob Andrzejczak and I am the State Senator representing the First Legislative District in New Jersey, which includes all of Cape May County, where you are now, the majority of Cumberland County, and a portion of Atlantic County. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words today.

There is no denying that wind energy has the potential to be a significant source of renewable energy in our country. There is no concern that we will run out of wind and its use reduces the use of fossil fuels. Wind energy is an important component of a diverse energy portfolio.

I believe these wind projects can not only be an important part of our fight to combat global climate change, but can also be beneficial to our local economy. Assuming Orsted utilizes the local labor force, there is the potential for good paying jobs in an area that relies mostly on the tourism and fishing industries.

That brings me, however, to my main concern with these proposals. According to the most recent report by NOAA, the Port of Cape May and Wildwood is second only to New Bedford, Massachusetts, in landings and overall value on the East Coast, and is in the top 15 fishing ports in the United States.

Commercial and recreational fishing are a billion-dollar industry to New Jersey. Recreational fishing is a major driver of this region's tourism economy, attracting visitors from across the Tri-State area and beyond. These industries also help ensure the growth of adjacent businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, bait and tackle shops, boat rentals, and area gas stations, to name a few. Much of the commercial landings are sold to area restaurants, as well as purveyors in Philadelphia, New York, Europe, China, and around the world.

I make these points to emphasize the importance that the fishing industry holds to Cape May County, to South Jersey, and New Jersey as a whole. As such, it has been frustrating to say the least that many of the industry's questions about the potential effects that these windmill projects will have on the fisheries off our coast have gone unanswered by the windmill companies. I think most would agree that if the windmill project succeeded and our fishing industry was allowed to continue to thrive unimpeded, that would be a win for everyone. But it is disingenuous to assume that there will be no effect on fisheries and the hard-working men and women who work in them.

So I would make this one request as both the State and federal government move forward in this process, that the fishing industry have a legitimate, and equal, seat at the table; that their concerns be heard and adequately addressed by regulators and by industry.

I thank you for allowing me to speak before this committee today on this important issue.