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Acadia Center Testimony in Support of Offshore Wind Development

Chairperson Cervenka and Members of the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC),

Acadia Center appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of offshore wind energy development. Acadia Center is a non-profit research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the clean energy future by providing reliable information, comprehensive advocacy and problem-solving through innovation and collaboration.

Sources of electricity generation must become increasingly clean to build a low-carbon energy system in the Northeast. As renewable energy displaces high-carbon fossil fuel generation, cleaner electricity can replace petroleum and natural gas in transportation and heating by fueling electric vehicles and heat pumps. To move successfully to a clean, low-carbon future, states can advance grid-scale renewables, promote clean distributed generation, and strengthen market-based greenhouse gas (GHG) policies.

Acadia Center applauds the Coastal Resources Management Council for elevating the issue of climate change and developing the nation-leading Ocean Special Area Management Plan (Ocean-SAMP) which, in part, recognizes increasing offshore renewable energy production as a means of mitigating the effects of global climate change and insulating consumers from price volatility in the energy market.¹ The most recent reports from the [International Panel on Climate Change](#) and the [4th National Climate Assessment](#) also highlight the urgency to reduce GHG emissions as quickly as possible to mitigate the worst effects of global climate change.

The worst effects of climate change will dramatically impact our coastal areas, through rising sea level, soil erosion, and ocean warming and acidification which itself would impact fisheries activities well beyond the boundaries of the leased wind areas. “While there are potential impacts from offshore wind energy development, in many cases impacts tend to be localized and temporary, whereas climate change is wide spread and on a magnitude not found from any other potential impact.”²

Good wind speeds, shallow water, proximity to population centers, and rapid advances in wind turbine technology make offshore wind a promising grid-scale renewable resource in the Northeast that can provide power to millions of homes and will enable the region to reliably retire inefficient gas power generation plants. Acadia Center’s [EnergyVision](#) analysis forecasts that to meet GHG reductions of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, our region must take

¹ Ocean SAMP, Section 810.4

² Ocean SAMP, Section 810.4

aggressive action to shift electricity generation to clean renewable sources, including procurements of approximately 6,400 MW of offshore wind.³

This Vineyard Wind project represents the first 800 megawatts toward fulfilling that goal. The CRMC will continue to exercise its regulatory authority over several other projects in development within its jurisdiction, representing thousands more megawatts of clean energy. This Council has outlined clear expectations for wind developers in this region. Project sponsors should endeavor to work within the best practices framework the CRMC developed alongside the nation's first offshore wind project, the Block Island Wind Farm, and chart a more inclusive and equitable course forward that accounts for all affected communities.

It is similarly vital that states continue to show leadership and support widespread deployment of offshore wind resources through effective regulatory processes and clear legislative policies supporting a transition to a clean energy future. Governor Raimondo has signaled this commitment with Rhode Island's goal to procure 1,000 MW of clean renewable energy by 2020. Acadia Center looks forward to working with all stakeholders to develop policies supporting the rapid development of offshore wind.

Sincerely,



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³ Acadia Center, EnergyVision 2030, Electric Generation Companion Brief, p. 3