



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **RHODE ISLAND'S LARGEST CULTURAL ORGANIZATION FILES FEDERAL APPEALS TO HIGHLIGHT LEGAL ERRORS IN PERMITTING REVIEW OF OFFSHORE WIND FARMS**

**NOVEMBER 22, 2023. Newport, Rhode Island:** The Preservation Society of Newport County, Rhode Island's largest and nationally respected steward of historic preservation, has appealed federal agency decisions approving massive wind farms off the coast of Rhode Island.

[Read the appeals.](#)

The Preservation Society filed the appeals on November 22, 2023, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The appeals detail how the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) failed to comply with the heightened levels of review required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. BOEM improperly approved wind farms that will damage historic resources within the City of Newport, which is heavily dependent on heritage tourism. Federal law makes clear that the "viewsheds" of historic resources are as important as bricks and mortar. These appeals seek to preserve historic and pristine views from industrial-scale development.

"We support green energy," said Trudy Coxe, the Preservation Society's CEO. "For two years we pointed out serious problems with the federal permitting process, but BOEM never listened. Green energy projects need not come at the unnecessary loss to our community's irreplaceable character and sense of place. For more than a century millions of people have visited Newport to walk Cliff Walk, enjoy our beautiful beaches and tour Ocean Drive. These historic resources deserve the due process mandated by federal law."

BOEM approved almost 200 wind turbines over 800 feet tall – taller than an 80-story skyscraper – as close as 12 miles from Newport's coast. This is a project of unprecedented industrial scale with six additional wind farms slated for future approval which could add 800 turbines. Newport's National Historic Landmark districts, including the Bellevue Avenue Historic District, Ocean Drive Historic District and Ochre Point-Cliffs Historic District, as well as Brenton Point State Park and Sachuest National Wildlife Refuge, will see massive wind turbines across the entire horizon. BOEM determined during the permitting review that Newport will experience these adverse effects but failed to eliminate or mitigate them, as required by federal law.

Cultural Heritage Partners, a law firm specializing in historic preservation and cultural heritage law, represents the Preservation Society in the appeals. "Our federal laws must be enforced as Congress intended and all adverse effects minimized or mitigated as required by law," said Will Cook, the Preservation Society's counsel for offshore wind. "In rushing to issue permits for these massive energy development projects, BOEM skipped steps and failed to meet its legal obligations. Our appeals highlight BOEM's errors and ask that the process be done correctly. The people of Newport County deserve better."

*The Preservation Society of Newport County is a nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the area's historic architecture, landscapes, decorative*

*arts and social history. Its 11 historic properties – seven of them National Historic Landmarks – span more than 250 years of American architectural and social development.*

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