



March 3, 2020

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Murkowski and Manchin,

As you know, the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) and the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) stand in support of your American Energy Innovation Act. We applaud your continued leadership on this package of measures and believe they will bring meaningful improvements to the American economy and the future of American energy. As you work to pass this measure though, we also write on behalf of our organizations to encourage your support of an amendment likely to be offered along the lines of the bipartisan Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunities Act. We feel this amendment, if adopted, would serve to strengthen the AEIA and further set this country up economic growth and a 21st century electrical grid.

As you are aware, the offshore wind energy industry is at the beginning of what many predict will be a tremendous expansion. This growth will create jobs across the United States as some \$70 billion^[1] in new capital expenditures enter the market over the next decade. However, this growth will only be possible with skilled labor ready to rise to the challenges and opportunities created by a new sector in offshore energy. As we saw in the onshore oil and gas industry in energy plays like the Permian Basin in recent years, a shortage of trained labor can function as a brake on economic growth and energy development.²In the onshore wind sector there are now over 114,000 jobs, including thousands of wind turbine technicians, who represent the second fastest growing job in America, according to the Department of Labor. Identifying the skillsets, establishing programs and funding training opportunities has been a critical part of the job growth we've seen in the onshore wind space. Now we have the opportunity to take the lessons learned from onshore wind, oil, and gas and apply it to the offshore wind sector.

NOIA's and AWEA's memberships include domestic businesses already working to build new offshore wind farms. However, the U.S. will need *thousands* of new workers in the next decade to help this budding industry thrive. By establishing a federal grant program to assist colleges, universities, unions, and non-profits to develop programs, training, and internships, we can ensure that American workers are ready to fill these openings as they come about.

We of course respect concerns about federal investments in an era of high national debt. However, industry investment in offshore wind leases is already approaching nearly a half a billion dollars directly to the U.S. treasury. This, of course, does not count all the additional tax revenue a rapidly-expanding offshore wind industry will bring. By deploying a sliver of this new money entering federal coffers back into American communities to help fuel the growth, we are confident the offshore wind industry will pay dividends for even Americans who live far from the ocean.

NOIA's and AWEA's membership believes strongly in the importance of offshore wind energy development in America. Simply stated, we thank you for your work on this legislation and urge support for further improving it with an additional provision to bolster the growing wind industry. Passage will help America's offshore industries to bring jobs, investment, and energy to the process of building a better tomorrow for everyone.

Should you have any questions or concerns, your staff may contact NOIA's Vice President of Government Affairs Richard England at REngland@NOIA.org or AWEA's Senior Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for Offshore Wind, Laura Morton at lmorton@awea.org.

Respectfully,



Erik Milito
President, NOIA



Thomas C. Kiernan
CEO, American Wind Energy Association

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
cc: Senator Ed Markey
cc: Rep. William Keating