Guiding Principles for Offshore Wind

Stakeholder Engagement

Offshore Wind for All: Engaging New York Stakeholders

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | NYSERDA

Credit: MHI Vestas Offshore Wind

New York State is committed to the most aggressive clean energy and climate agenda in the country.

In 2019, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act) was signed into law to empower New Yorkers to work together to secure a clean, sustainable future and to set the bar for others to do the same in our fight on climate change. In addition to advancing our efforts to obtain 70 percent of New York State's electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and 100 percent zero-emissions electricity by 2040, the Climate Act codifies New York's pledge to a just transition and an equitable clean energy future by requiring that at least 35 percent of the benefits from clean energy investments are delivered to disadvantaged communities. It also commits New York to generating 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2035 and driving the growth of an inclusive clean energy economy.

The word "inclusive" is key.

For the last decade, stakeholders have been central to every area of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA's) offshore wind program. We have hosted more than 40 large-scale public meetings and open houses; dozens of roundtable meetings with experts; and hundreds of meetings with local leadership representatives. Stakeholder engagement informs our foundational studies, research priorities, and our procurement designs for offshore wind energy. We have established forums for ongoing coordination between developers, key ocean users, and subject-matter experts to develop adaptive mitigation plans to steward the responsible and cost-effective development of this important resource and projects. But we can't do this work alone: we need strong and committed partners in industry.

Offshore wind development offers tremendous opportunities for job creation and community investment, demonstrates New York's leadership in the fight against climate change, and has the potential to create more resilient and equitable communities across our State. With these great opportunities come challenges. Offshore wind will interact with many New York communities and ocean users – from manufacturing activities along the Hudson River up to the Capital Region, to assembly and maintenance port facilities and cable interconnection points in New York City and Long Island, to impacts many miles offshore in the Atlantic Ocean. To bring this incredible effort to bear, comprehensive stakeholder engagement efforts must permeate every aspect of project design, planning, development, and operations. NYSERDA has laid out this set of Guiding Principles as "gold standard" expectations for the offshore wind industry to meaningfully involve multifaceted stakeholders in all aspects of offshore wind project development from start to finish.

In publishing these Guiding Principles, NYSERDA emphasizes its commitment to prioritize future offshore wind projects that demonstrate authentic involvement of impacted communities and ensure equitable access to the many opportunities this growing industry has to offer. These Guiding Principles are intended to support developers as they design their Stakeholder Engagement Plans, which, similar to existing Environmental and Fisheries Mitigation Plans, will be required in future NYSERDA solicitations for Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificates (ORECs). The Guiding Principles provide a framework for effectively and meaningfully engaging with New York's diverse and vibrant communities as we work together to develop our State's robust offshore wind infrastructure. We are eager to involve all New Yorkers in this exciting and prosperous new industry.

We look forward to working alongside our communities and developers to achieve a healthier and more prosperous clean energy future for all New Yorkers.

Why is Stakeholder Engagement Important for this Industry?

Stakeholder engagement is the foundation for successful projects and an inclusive clean energy economy. Early and consistent engagement with community members by an offshore wind developer and its contractors and suppliers cultivates community understanding of offshore wind projects, promotes mutual understanding of community priorities, and provides opportunities to build upon shared objectives. Similarly, engagement with other affected parties can help identify nuanced challenges and opportunities to improve project outcomes. Done well through all stages of project development – design, planning, permitting, construction, and operations of offshore wind projects – stakeholder engagement cultivates trusting relationships and provides transparency between developers, local communities, and other stakeholders. Early and consistent stakeholder engagement delivers stronger, and more socially, environmentally, and economically responsible projects that ultimately maximize its economic benefits.

Stakeholders contribute valuable local and expert knowledge to offshore wind development processes and can offer feedback that promotes successful project outcomes. A collaborative relationship between developers, ocean, and coastal stakeholders and adaptive thinking throughout the lifecycle of a project is crucial for building support for this renewable resource and its many opportunities.

Key Reasons for Early and Consistent Engagement

1. Support **inclusive decision making** and knowledge building
2. Identify, **avoid**, **minimize**, or **mitigate potential conflicts** before they arise
3. **Build support** for the offshore wind industry and clean energy transition
4. **Meet the critical goals** of the Climate Act

Key Terms Definitions

Just Transition: A framework wherein advancement of the clean energy economy involves proactive steps to bring new clean energy investments, jobs, and training programs primarily to communities that have experienced the greatest environmental and health consequences from the fossil fuel industry.

Stakeholder Outreach: The first step toward engagement. Meaningful engagement can only happen with the right people at the table. Outreach involves establishing relationships with stakeholders and making sure they have all the relevant and necessary information to take part in the project.

Stakeholder Engagement: A process whereby decision makers collaborate with people who have an interest in a project through communication, consultation, negotiation, and relationship building. Stakeholder engagement is used across sectors and with varied outputs, but is typically intended as a tool to involve those impacted by a project or who have influence over it to participate in a planning or implementation process.

Clean Energy Economy: Economic system in which supply chains are transformed to meet demand for low-carbon energy technologies.

Disadvantaged Communities (as defined by the Climate Act): Communities that bear burdens of negative public health effects, environmental pollution, impacts of climate change, and possess certain socioeconomic criteria, or comprise high concentrations of low- and moderate- income households.

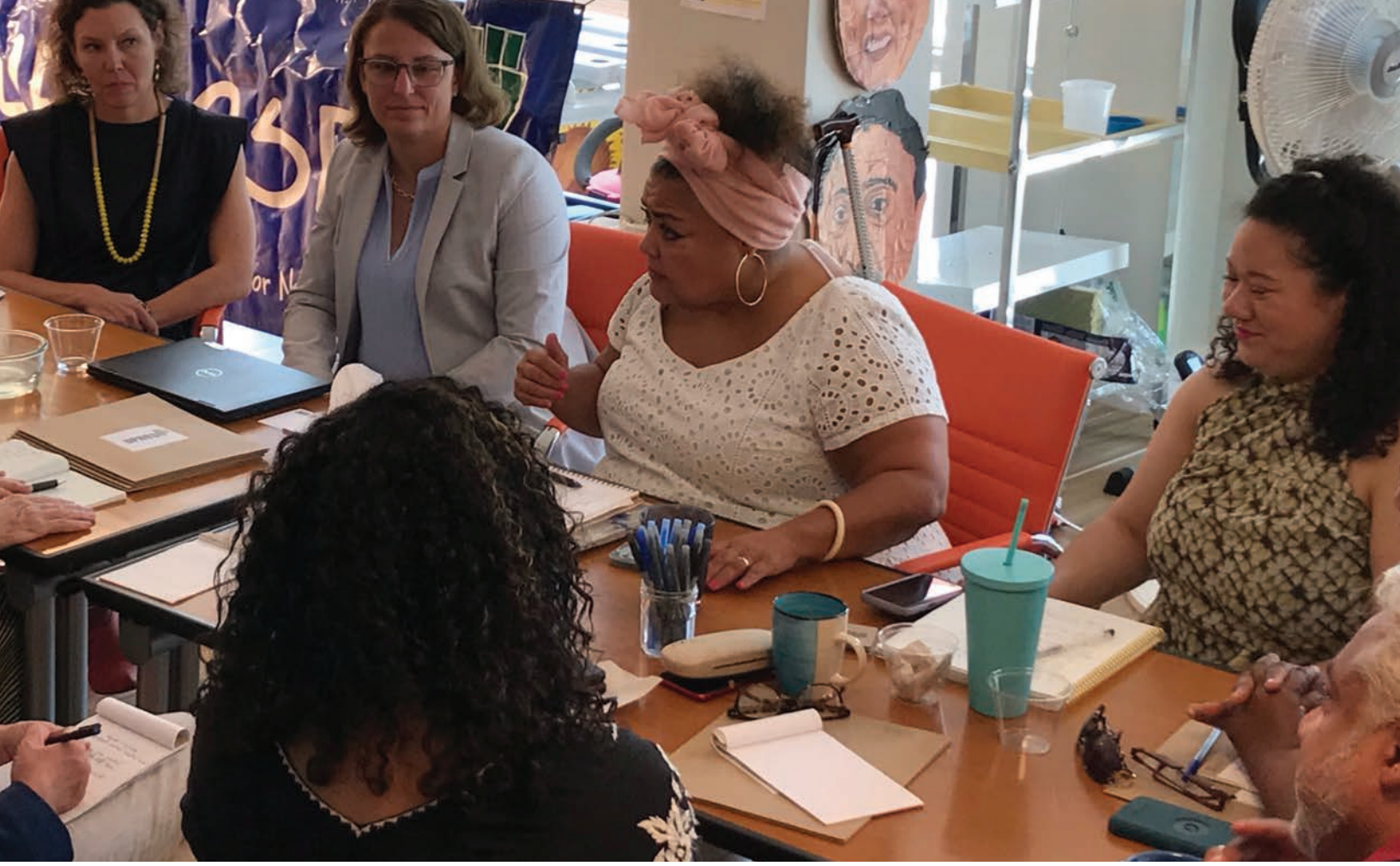
Who are New York's Offshore Wind Stakeholders?

Offshore wind is bringing bold changes to New York State — changes that intersect with a wide range of individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses. These stakeholders may experience the positive economic and environmental impacts that the transition to clean energy will have on their communities, as well as experience the physical changes from new onshore and offshore infrastructure. Each stakeholder represents a unique perspective and can offer meaningful insights for the development and implementation processes.

Snapshot of Key Offshore Wind Stakeholders in New York State

Indigenous Nations

Indigenous Nations near offshore wind projects have an important role in offshore wind development, unique from stakeholders. These centuries-old communities have unique relationships with natural forces and a legacy of reliance on coastal and marine environments. Working in partnership with these sovereign nations ensures that projects reflect the needs and interests of indigenous citizens and territories.



While it is critical to include a wide range of voices, including the key stakeholder groups illustrated on the previous page, it is also necessary to direct engagement efforts toward lifting up and including those historically left out of development decisions.

In particular, engaging disadvantaged communities, minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOBs) in the development process is important to an inclusive outreach and engagement process, and consistent with the equity-driven Climate Act.

Disadvantaged Communities

The Climate Act calls for the energy sector to prioritize the safety, health, and economic growth of disadvantaged communities and adopt practices that enable and empower these communities to thrive in the clean energy future. Disadvantaged communities can provide historical knowledge and local expertise to inform workforce training and development opportunities and community investments that would best serve their neighborhoods and offshore wind projects.

Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs)

New York State's commitment to a just transition requires that energy industries reflect diverse business owners, including those historically underrepresented in government-sponsored projects and the clean energy workforce. Ensuring that MWBE and SDVOB contractors have meaningful roles in the offshore wind development supply chain creates new procurement partnerships that build wealth and strengthen entire communities.

How does NYSERDA Prioritize Stakeholder Engagement?

Since 2016, New York State has engaged a wide range of stakeholders to chart a course for the responsible and cost-effective advancement of offshore wind. Through public meetings and collaborative workshops, forums for expert working groups, briefings and consultations, in-place one-on-one meetings and more, New York State continues to solicit input from and partner with diverse stakeholder groups in an adaptive approach to offshore wind development. Prioritizing stakeholder outreach and engagement using a range of methods allows the State and the offshore wind industry to better understand and respond to the diverse perspectives, needs, and concerns of stakeholders at every stage of the development process and ensures that New Yorkers are positioned to maximize the benefits of offshore wind while minimizing risks.

NYSERDA has used the following forums to connect with thousands of New Yorkers whose involvement and input has shaped the future of offshore wind:

Digital Communications

NYSERDA shares e-blasts about major announcements, including offshore wind project awards, upcoming events and initiatives, and engagement opportunities to its network of over 3,000 recipients, and posts regularly on social media to its more than 14,000 followers.

Briefings with Elected Officials and Local Leadership

NYSERDA has met with more than 100 elected officials, their staff, and other community leaders to discuss major offshore wind announcements and what it means for their constituents.

Workshops and Conferences

NYSERDA has brought together hundreds of stakeholders from industry, academia, labor, workforce development, commercial and recreational fishing, environmental advocates, technical non-profits, the maritime industry, and local governments in workshops and conferences to discuss opportunities and challenges in offshore wind development, including State of the Science, transit lane, and workforce development workshops.

Public Meetings, Webinars, and Open Houses

Between 2017 and 2021, NYSERDA led over 40 public meetings, webinars, and open houses across the State. From the Capital Region to Long Island, and via online platforms that reach statewide audiences, NYSERDA has conducted outreach to thousands of New Yorkers around offshore wind development.

Offshore Wind Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

NYSERDA and other state agency partners host between four and seven working group meetings each year with each of its TWGs. TWGs bring together experts in commercial fishing, the environment, maritime commerce, and jobs and supply chain into a facilitated forum to proactively discuss offshore wind development local to New York and in the Northeast– reflecting the fact that many important stakeholders and resources (commercial fishing, maritime industry, marine wildlife) don't differentiate between state lines. These dialogues bring key stakeholder groups together with state and federal regulators and offshore wind industry leaders to make important decisions that shape offshore wind development to maximize benefits and avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts.

Focus Groups

In-depth conversations with members of the global offshore wind industry happen several times each year to take a pulse on the industry and plan for the future.

Supplier Forums

NYSERDA has connected with hundreds of people across the state to promote new business opportunities in the offshore wind pipeline. Events in New York City and Albany connect global industry representatives with local service, component, and materials providers.

Offshore Wind Youth Action Program (OWYA)

NYSERDA is supporting young people across the state to learn about offshore wind and take action in their communities. By providing resources for youth, educators, and organizations, NYSERDA is supporting its network to connect hundreds of young people to the State's clean energy goals.

Spotlight on the Fisheries Technical Working Group

New York's four offshore wind TWGs — Maritime, Fisheries, Environmental, and Jobs and Supply Chain — were initiated out of a desire for offshore wind stakeholders to learn from one another and in an environment where NYSERDA and New York State agencies are peers in exploration, feedback, and decision-making. The outcomes from these dynamic conversations are wide-ranging — sometimes it leads to TWG members advocating for a decision or policy with their elected official, while at other times, it leads to new research or solicitations. TWGs foster knowledge building across regions and disciplines that their members and NYSERDA can utilize in shaping offshore wind development.

In 2019, the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) sought to understand and assess how offshore wind developers were planning to approach measures to mitigate impacts to fishing activities when building and operating offshore wind farms. In response, developers put forth mitigation proposals, presenting solutions to a range of issues. This stressed to the group that appropriate mitigation would be performed and that there was a record to hold developers accountable to.

NYSERDA, in partnership with the Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG), refined the list of tactics drafted by developers into a mitigation plan template, which lays out the baseline actions all future developers are expected to take. NYSERDA has also engaged the E-TWG and F-TWG to evolve current mitigation plans to enhance environmental and fisheries mitigation approaches so that they meet future needs.

What began as an exploration to understand and assess the plans of developers has turned into an actionable tool for ensuring that offshore wind works with stakeholders to engage in critical dialogue and actions to preserve and protect fishing and environmental interests.

Credit: GE Renewable Energy Learning Center and Farmingdale State College

Stakeholder Engagement Guiding Principles for Offshore Wind

NYSERDA is committed to advancing offshore wind development that prioritizes meaningful and transparent stakeholder engagement. The following ten guiding principles reflect the expectation of OSW developers, as supported by NYSERDA. Offshore wind stakeholder engagement initiated by New York State and offshore wind developers should be:

1

Collaborative

- Engaging early and often
- Seeking shared interests across all parties to develop actionable goals
- Encouraging cooperative dialogue
- Partnering on policy development and program planning, implementation, and evaluation

2

Pursuing Equity

- Seeking to understand the structural and systemic causes of energy and environmental injustice and inequity
- Creating space for and elevating voices of those with less power, resources, and privilege (recognizing systemic racism and other prevailing inequities)
- Identifying barriers to participation or access to program benefits for diverse communities
- Publicly acknowledging the expertise of and contributions made by stakeholders
- Recognizing the benefits of engaging communities as partners in determining their role in the clean energy transition

3

Outcomes-Driven with a Bias Toward Action

- Developing well-defined goals and desired outcomes through collective understanding of shared interests
- Supporting a clear organizational structure and approach including metrics for both process and outputs

4

Inclusive and Accessible

- Considering the full scope of potentially affected parties and appropriate geographic scale and, when appropriate, promoting regional collaboration
- Considering accessibility factors, especially for disadvantaged communities, including convenience of meeting times and accessibility of locations or virtual platforms, childcare needs, language and interpretation needs, and variety of opportunities to participate and ways to provide input

5

Open, Transparent and Accountable

- Acknowledging the knowns and unknowns, clarifying assumptions and intentions upfront and throughout the process
- Identifying impediments to progress, tracking and reporting commitments and progress
- Making materials and resources available to the public to the greatest extent feasible
- Clearly communicating decisions made and reasons why to all participants as well as the general public

6

Diverse and Representative

- Considering and incorporating a variety of interests, points of view and expertise
- Seeking broad representation across impacted geographies, industries, socio-economic groups, races, ethnicities, cultures, and organizations of differing sizes

7

Supported

- Demonstrating an understanding of the importance of a long-term commitment to stakeholder engagement and allocating resources to continuously support strong engagement and project initiatives

8

Driven by Whole-Systems Thinking

- Acting as local stewards alongside communities in helping communities meet their self-determined goals with regard to community health, resiliency, local emissions, and a green economy in a way that reflects and respects local wisdoms, traditions, and cultures
- Working across sectors to implement solutions with sustainable and mutually-reinforcing benefits

9

Flexible

- Identifying multiple pathways to the desired outcomes and adapting approaches to address emerging issues as needed and in different ways based on what works best within the agreed-upon organizational structure

10

Proactive in Decision Making

- Considering all aspects of offshore wind energy resources, ecosystems, and stakeholders
- Considering the relative impacts, risks, and challenges against the benefits and opportunities provided by cost-effective and responsible offshore wind energy

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These Guiding Principles should serve as a framework for approaching stakeholder engagement — a launching pad for creative and dynamic engagement that encourages all voices to be heard and works in partnership with communities to realize benefits from clean energy.

Stakeholder Engagement Plans

NYSERDA will require offshore wind developers to submit Stakeholder Engagement Plans as part of their project proposals in future offshore wind solicitations. The plan template will require developers to describe their approach to key elements of stakeholder engagement, similar to current Fishing and Environmental Mitigation Plans.

Stakeholder Engagement Plans will be made publicly available upon bid submission to NYSERDA's future OREC solicitations and should therefore utilize language accessible to the general public that demonstrates an understanding of New York's diverse stakeholders, unique coastal and marine resources, and local indigenous communities.

In keeping with NYSERDA's consideration of Fisheries and Environmental Mitigation Plans, NYSERDA will prioritize projects in its bid evaluation process that are supported by comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plans, which will be appended to the executed contracts of awarded projects.

What will the Stakeholder Engagement Plans Entail?

Stakeholder Engagement Plans should reflect developers' commitment to the Guiding Principles outlined in this document and should consider the following:

- ☑ The developer's overall approach to stakeholder identification and outreach
- ☑ How the developer intends to define the project and stakeholder engagement goals in collaboration with stakeholders
- ☑ Options for engagement activities and potential partnerships with community members, institutions, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations
- ☑ An explicit strategy for engaging and delivering benefits to disadvantaged communities consistent with the Climate Act's focus on building an inclusive, clean energy economy
- ☑ The developer's approach to decision-making and identifying opportunities for collaborative decision-making throughout the development process
- ☑ The developer's plan for providing consistent follow-up with the stakeholders they have engaged to make clear how their input was considered and its impact on the project

Prioritizing stakeholder engagement is a keystone of NYSERDA's work in building a clean energy future. The Guiding Principles outlined in this document formalize NYSERDA's commitment to stakeholder engagement in advancing offshore wind development.

Engagement is an iterative process. Establishing opportunities for collaborative project development is key to building long-lasting relationships with stakeholders, positioning projects to be successful in the long term, and facilitating an equitable transition to New York's clean energy future.

This moment presents important opportunities for stakeholders to be active participants in the fight on climate change. The best results come when we all work together.

Learn more about New York State's clean energy goals and how NYSERDA is advancing offshore wind opportunities at **nyserda.ny.gov/offshore-wind**.

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