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**SAVE RIGHT WHALES NEW JERSEY CALLS FOR FURTHER DELIBERATIONS ON
IMPACT OF OFFSHORE WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENTS**

**IN LATEST LEGISLATIVE PUSH, INTERNATIONAL WIND ENERGY CONGLOMERATE
ORSTED SEEKS TO ADJUST PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS TAKING HUNDREDS OF
MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS**

LONG BEACH ISLAND, New Jersey – With less than 10 days left in the New Jersey legislative session Save Right Whales is calling on legislators to not bring special legislation to the floor that experts say will have devastating effects on the state’s coastlines and is opposed by the majority of residents living along the Jersey Shore.

The bill, A5651, would allow international wind energy conglomerate Orsted to keep a portion of federal and state tax credits, which are estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, in contradiction to agreements the company entered into previously with state’s Board of Public Utilities that require Orsted and other offshore wind companies to return those tax credits to customers. Orsted has threatened in recent weeks, that if the financials aren’t adjusted to their favor, they are prepared to “walk away” from their New Jersey coastal projects.

“New Jersey’s offshore wind program has thus far been a series of rushed decisions made via executive order without the proper research done on the negative impacts offshore turbines bring to the ecosystems around them,” said Save Right Whales New Jersey Spokesperson David Shanker. “We’re calling on New Jersey’s legislators to stop the rush before Offshore Wind Energy projects kill New Jersey’s marine wildlife, industry, and make our beaches and beach towns uninhabitable.”

In January 2018, skirting the legislature, N.J. Gov. Phil Murphy issued an executive order directing state agencies to work with offshore energy developers to create the infrastructure allowing for 3,500 megawatts to be generated by 2030. In November 2019, Murphy signed a second executive order raising the offshore wind goal to 7,500 megawatts by 2035. A third executive order, signed in September 2022 increased the goal to 11,000 megawatts by 2040, while instructing the state’s Board of Public Utilities to study the feasibility of increasing the target further.

“Thus far, the United States only has one installed offshore energy system in Block Island, Rhode Island, which has seen a significant number of setbacks since its initial activation date in 2016. It has yet

to provide reliable coverage and affordable energy production and that system is only a fraction of what Murphy's rushed executive orders call for, all while not studying the real impact these systems have on marine wildlife and the industries that rely on our shores," Shanker added.

Between December 2022 and March 2023, more than 10 dead whales – mostly humpbacks – have either washed ashore or been seen off the coast in New Jersey in what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is calling “unusual mortality events,” and some groups, including the Long Branch-based environmental organization Clean Ocean Action and numerous New Jersey politicians, are calling for thorough investigations into the whales' deaths and a moratorium on offshore wind development activity off New Jersey until a cause of the strandings is determined. Due to post-mortem decomposition, less than half of the whales that wash ashore are still fresh enough to examine their causes of death.

A petition filed with legislators earlier this year received more than 506,000 signatures from across the state urging the governor and President Biden to halt offshore wind activity, including the installation of multiple turbine systems roughly the size of the Eiffel Tower. Murphy and his team have yet to respond.

Save Right Whales is a grassroots coalition made up of more than 11 environmental and community organizations, scientists, and conservationists working to protect the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale and other marine life from the industrialization of our ocean habitat through large-scale offshore wind energy development across the eastern seaboard. For more information or to get involved, visit: <https://saverightwhales.org/>.

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