



# Position Statement

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## Offshore Wind – Regulatory Framework

*Sierra Club urges lawmakers to enact an appropriate regulatory framework for addressing proposals for offshore wind development. (Legislation is expected soon.)*

### **Sierra Club Perspective**

Tapping into Michigan's extensive offshore wind resources could create a significant number of jobs, drive economic development in the clean energy sector and help Michigan become more energy independent. However, offshore wind projects must be done in a way that protects existing navigational and recreational uses of the Great Lakes, birds, bats and aquatic ecosystems, and minimizes impact on the aesthetic qualities of the lakes.

Michigan currently lacks a regulatory framework for ensuring that offshore wind projects are carefully considered in an open and transparent manner. Before we say "yes" or "no" to offshore wind projects, Michigan must enact a process which takes all issues into consideration and balances the need for clean energy with the protection of our Great Lakes assets.

### **Issue Background**

In 2009, a \$3 billion offshore wind development project was proposed by Scandia Offshore Wind LLC for an area in Lake Michigan between the Silver Lake Sand Dunes and Ludington. The proposal, which had not been well vetted, generated significant public opposition. Some of the proposed 100-200 turbines would have been located just two miles from the shoreline, which boast some of the state's most popular beaches and coastal vistas.

The scale of the proposal, the nearness to shore, and the fact that there was no formal process at the state level for considering such proposals resulted in significant controversy and confusion. Much of that could have been avoided if the state had had a regulatory process in place.

Legislation to address this critical gap in regulation must:

- Clearly define the roles of state and local government entities
- Provide adequate permitting revenues to pay for the regulatory program
- Be completely transparent and allow for significant public participation and input
- Ensure the protection of the Great Lakes from unacceptable impacts
- Spell out processes for site selection, leasing of bottomlands, construction permitting, operational standards, decommissioning, royalties, etc.

*Please contact the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter office at (517) 484-2372 for more information.  
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