

# PENOBSCOT BAY WATCH

Caring for Maine's biggest bay

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## Penobscot Bay Watch Warns BOEM of Potential Threats to Gulf of Maine Currents from Offshore Wind Development

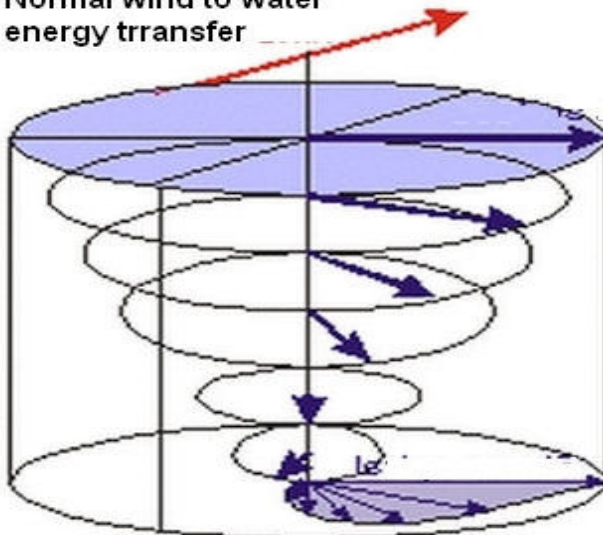
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Matinicus Rock - July 22, 2024 - Penobscot Bay Watch, a citizen's association dedicated to the health of Maine's largest bay and the Gulf of Maine it is part of, has submitted comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) expressing significant concerns about the proposed expansion of floating offshore wind turbine (FOWT) leases into the Gulf of Maine.

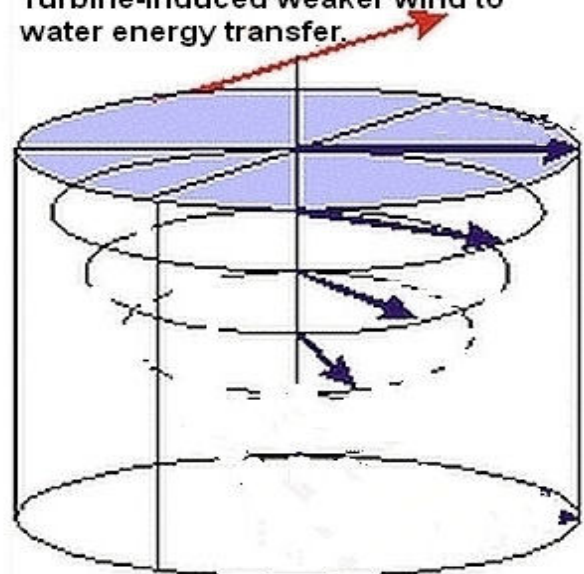
The Bay Watch comments focus on a critical yet often overlooked aspect of offshore wind development: the diversion of substantial amounts of wind energy away from the ocean surface.

Floating ocean wind turbines' energy diversion reduces the natural sea surface transfer of energy into the water column below, weakening and destabilizing the part of the local water current passing under FOWT farms.

Normal wind to water energy transfer



Turbine-induced weaker wind to water energy transfer.



Red arrows are wind direction. Black arrows =transferred wind energy

This kinetic wind energy ordinarily contributes to powering the Gulf's vital water currents.

Ron Huber, spokesperson for Penobscot Bay Watch, stated, "Our review of the science suggests that the proposed wind farms could divert over 6 gigawatts of kinetic energy from the Gulf of Maine's air-sea interface.

“This is NOT 6 gigawatts of “surplus energy” Huber said. “The wind-driven Gulf of Maine ecosystem is using it all.”

“It's a zero-sum game we are playing against Mother Nature”.

The Gulf of Maine's regional life-force-driving energetics will be chronically 6 gigawatts weaker.” Huber said.

“ Floating offshore wind farming is essentially parasitism of natural sea/sky energetics.”

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### **Key points from Penobscot Bay Watch's comments:**

1. The Gulf of Maine functions as a complex, interconnected system, with currents acting as its "circulatory system."
2. Wind Farming is an extractive industry. There is no “surplus” wind energy
3. Large-scale energy extraction by floating wind farms will directly and indirectly weaken Maine's wind-powered Coastal Currents and its other crucial currents
4. Weakened currents may lose their structure and velocity. This disrupts nutrient transport, larval and juvenile fish and shellfish migrations and other energy dependent ecosystem functions.
5. The impacts are local to each operating floating windfarm and its wind shadow of de-energized slowed water.
6. But BOEM is making no effort to consider the cumulative effects of multiple FOWT installations across the Gulf ; each de-energizing passing waters at specific sites. What of their wild inhabitants - from microplankton to whales and eagle?
7. This needs to be considered by BOEM & NOAA at the level needed to determine what level of “taking” is safe. If any

### **Penobscot Bay Watch is calling for:**

- A comprehensive, Gulf-wide assessment of cumulative impacts of wind energy

diversion at at the scale proposed by BOEM before proceeding with large-scale FOWT deployments.

- Adoption of a precautionary, phased approach to FOWT deployment with ongoing monitoring.
- Designation of the Eastern Maine Coastal Current as a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC).
- Exploration of alternative renewable energy options that work in harmony with the Gulf's natural energy flows.

"We're not against renewable energy," Huber clarified. "But we must ensure that in solving one environmental crisis, we aren't creating another. The Gulf of Maine is a unique and vital ecosystem that demands our utmost care and consideration."

For more information, contact:

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About Penobscot Bay Watch: [Penbay.org](http://Penbay.org) &

the Penobscot Bay Blog [penobcotbay.blogspot.com](http://penobcotbay.blogspot.com)