

North Carolina could lead on wind power

Push to get wind turbines spinning off our shores

After more than a year of inaction, federal officials recently announced progress in getting wind turbines spinning off our shores.

On Dec. 13, the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released a "Call for Information and Nominations" for three lease locations in the federal waters off the North Carolina coast.

"North Carolina is now one step closer towards becoming a national leader in offshore wind," said David Rogers, field director for Environment North Carolina.

The purpose of the "Call" is to gauge interest in acquiring commercial wind leases in one or all of the designated areas along the Outer Continental Shelf.

Hundreds show at public hearings

This announcement represents the largest call for information to date. In fact, this more than doubles the area potentially available for wind development, since the three North Carolina areas are larger than the combined totals of all the other states that have taken this step.

North Carolina has the largest wind power potential of any state on the Atlantic coast.

In January, hundreds showed up to public hearings along our coast to show support for offshore wind. Rogers testified and



Photo: Vattentail, Flickr

▲ *N.C. has more potential for offshore wind than any other Atlantic state.*

delivered nearly 2,000 public comments to federal officials. The hearings closely followed President Obama signing a bill to extend key tax credits for wind power and avert the "fiscal cliff."

Gov. McCrory backs offshore wind

Also in January, Gov. Pat McCrory wrote a letter to the Obama administration to convey his support for developing North

Carolina's awesome offshore wind power potential.

"We applaud Gov. McCrory's actions in favor of offshore wind, and urge him to remain a champion for this clean, renewable resource every step of the way," said Rogers.



Photo: Staff

take action

To take action to get wind spinning off the shores of North Carolina visit www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org.

Environment North Carolina staff delivering over 2,000 public comments to Sen. Kay Hagan, asking her to vote to extend the wind tax credits.



To our members

This time of the year, we're in transition. Much of the winter has passed, and we're right on the brink of spring—full of change, new possibilities and new beginnings.

From my perspective as State Director for Environment North Carolina, I'm looking forward to many things, including defending our waterways and citizens from fracking, and pushing forward on key wind and solar initiatives.

Now is the time for change. Not just because we're changing seasons, but also because Superstorm Sandy and record-high temperatures gave us a preview in 2012 of the consequences we will face if we don't take action on some of our dirty and dangerous practices.

I'm happy to have you with us as we work every day toward change that will create a cleaner, greener future.

Thanks,

Elizabeth Ouzts
State Director

Recent action

Keep clean energy moving forward in 2013

One of the brightest spots of North Carolina's economy in recent years has been the incredible growth of solar power and other clean energy alternatives—which supplied North Carolina with more than 20,000 jobs between 2007 and 2012 and displaced tons of pollution that would have otherwise spewed from the state's coal-fired power plants.

The six-fold increase in solar power in recent years has been due in large part to a clean energy standard, backed by Environment North Carolina and others, that requires 7.5 percent of the state's energy to come from clean sources, including solar, wind and geothermal.

But now, some in the General Assembly are pushing to undo the state's progress in clean energy. Rep. Mike Hager, the incoming leader of a key committee, has vowed to push legislation to stall North Carolina's clean energy development. Environment North Carolina staff and volunteers will be lobbying and organizing to ensure North Carolina preserves its clean energy law—the first of its kind in the Southeast.

Developers reset sights on Jordan Lake

Proponents of the controversial 751 South development were dealt a blow last year, when their attempts to pass a law in the General Assembly to promote the project near Jordan Lake were thwarted by a bipartisan collection of state senators.

But they're expected to push their bill again in 2013, and we're gearing up to to stop them.

The bill, introduced at the 11th hour at the end of last year's session, would have forced the City of Durham to provide water service to the massive development—even though the city council had already voted to do exactly the opposite. Developers are also planning further erosion of a 2009 law that sought to restore Jordan Lake by reducing pollution from development and other sources over time. Environment North Carolina supporters urged former Gov. Bev Perdue to veto that bill, which narrowly passed in the Senate and ultimately became law.



Dollars drained by dirty drilling

Photo: B. Mark Shmerling

Joined by several local elected officials from Creedmoor to Chatham County, Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center released a report in September documenting the monetary costs imposed by “fracking,” the controversial form of gas drilling the General Assembly moved to legalize in July.

According to our report, “The Costs of Fracking,” this dangerous drilling creates millions of dollars in costs—many paid at the local level—related to everything from contaminated drinking water to accidents that require emergency responses.

“Fracking’s threat to our drinking water is bad enough, but it turns out that this dirty drilling also imposes heavy dollars-and-cents costs,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, Environment North Carolina state director.

One of the worst problems associated with fracking is the contamination of drinking water, and that comes with a price tag. For example, in Dimock, Pa., fracking operations contaminated the drinking water wells of several households for roughly three years, perhaps more. Providing just 14 of those families with temporary water cost more than \$100,000. And providing a permanent new source of clean drinking water would have cost an estimated \$11.8 million.

At risk: Drinking water for 360,000

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that more than 360,000 North Carolinians rely on private wells for drinking water in the 12-county area where shale gas supplies are suspected.

“As a county commissioner, I am concerned that as the drillers take their profits and leave North Carolina, the cost of the cleanup will be passed on to the Chatham County taxpayer,” said Sally Kost, Chatham County Commissioner.

Approximately 10 counties and cities in North Carolina have already passed resolutions and ordinances against

fracking—ranging from outright bans to appeals to the N.C. General Assembly to proceed with caution.

\$9.8 million in health costs

In Arkansas’ Fayetteville Shale region, air pollution from fracking operations imposed health costs estimated at \$9.8 million in one year. In Texas’ Barnett Shale region, those costs reach \$270,000 per day during the summer smog season.

A 2011 survey in eight Pennsylvania counties found that 911 calls had increased in seven of them, with the number of calls increasing in one county by 49 percent over three years.

Our report comes as the state’s Mining and Energy Commission is beginning to develop recommendations on a range of regulatory issues, including impact fees and bonding.

“We already know about fracking’s damage to our environment and health,” said Ouzts. “These dollars and cents costs are one more reason to reject this dirty drilling practice.”



Photo: Dan Speicher

take action

▲ In December, Elizabeth Ouzts toured Pa. to get a close-up look at fracking’s impact.

Tell your state legislators,
Don’t Frack North Carolina:
www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org



Photo: B. Mark Shmerling

Industry-dominated commission ignores fracking risks

“You’re more likely to have a meteorite fall from the sky and hit you on the head than you are to contaminate groundwater with fracking fluid percolating up from under the ground.”

— Jim Womack

These are words from the head of the new commission created to establish rules to govern fracking in North Carolina. Jim Womack and his new colleagues on the Mining and Energy Commission appear intent on pushing the practice forward, even though another vote of the Legislature is required if fracking is to begin.

Despite the posturing of the Mining and Energy Commission, Environment North Carolina remains committed to keeping the risky practice of fracking out of our state. We’ve gathered more than 5,000 signatures to Gov. Pat McCrory to urge him to oppose the practice, and with the help of colleagues across the country, we’re launching a petition drive to generate more than 1 million signatures.

The Mining and Energy Commission’s rules will be like the fox guarding the hen house when it comes to natural gas drilling in our state. That’s why we’ll be working to bring as many voices together as possible, from city and county officials, to farmers, to average citizens, all to speak out against the practice.

112 South Blount St., Ste. 102
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 833-0015

Environment North Carolina

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Environment North Carolina

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and green spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment North Carolina. We focus exclusively on protecting North Carolina's air, water and green spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Lack of funds leaves special places at risk

Together with our national federation, Environment North Carolina has been pushing Congress to increase funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a program that provides crucial funding to protect our parks from development. The program is meant to set aside \$900 million each year to buy and preserve special places in North Carolina and across the country.

In the past, the fund has helped protect and restore treasured places in North Carolina, such as the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

But Congress raids the fund every year. And 2012 saw the most drastic, reckless cut yet. House leaders moved to slash a full 93 percent of it—a shocking move, even for the most anti-environment Congress in recent memory, and a slap in the face to North Carolinians who care about our parks. In response, Environment North Carolina and the rest of our national coalition of state environmental groups have leapt into action, mobilizing support for our parks and treasured places and calling on Congress to provide the LWCF with the funding our parks and special places deserve.



Photo: Jim Dollar, Flickr

more inside

Gearing up to fight for Jordan Lake; Preserving N.C.'s special places; Report on economic costs of fracking, and more.

◀ [Pelican at Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)