

Good afternoon, Thank you for taking my testimony

My name is Peggy Middaugh, and I am representing Unitarian Universalist Faith Action, a New Jersey faith based organization which supports 20 congregations statewide. Our faith is guided by a set of principles which include “respect for the interconnected web of all life of which we are a part”. That includes all living organisms both plant and animal; both charismatic and non-charismatic.

We believe in science. On this topic of off shore wind as a response to climate change, we have been following the work of scientists from many academic institutions, private organizations and government agencies including the Rutgers Climate Institute and your own very esteemed researchers at BOEM.

The overarching threat to the ocean environment and its inhabitants is climate change; from warming waters, acidification, changes in ocean currents, the marine world is suffering from these impacts and it will only get worse. Our faith tells us that it is our moral obligation to do something about it.

We’ve been following the issue of Climate Change for many years, and are alarmed by the continuing and increasingly dire messages presented by the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The world is warming quickly; we are facing an existential crisis which calls for an immediate response. And we believe in an Everything Everywhere All at once approach

We support off shore wind, and the current proposal for the Atlantic Shores South project because we believe it is a critical component to achieving Governor Murphy’s goal of reaching 100% renewable energy by 2035. We have been active participants of encouraging New Jersey’s clean energy future through the Energy Master Plan process, by promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and solar, as well as off shore wind.

We are pleased by the amount of research conducted prior to permitting of this project, and the plans to mitigate impacts to marine life. We encourage that research to continue in tandem with development and adjust as necessary if a conflict occurs. We also realize that there will be adverse impacts as with any large project, but that impacts must be balanced with the alternatives, continued use of fossil fuels.

We also recognize that the burdens of our current energy production system of relying heavily on fossil fuels have fallen predominantly on low income communities and communities of color, and that as we transition to clean renewable sources of power, we have an opportunity to change that dynamic. We are pleased that New Jersey is positioned to benefit from many thousands of jobs that will be created by the Off Shore Wind industry, and are working to ensure that workers from marginalized communities are included in those jobs.

We urge you to move forward on this project expeditiously and responsibly.

We plan to submit more detailed comments in writing.

Thank you.