

# Offshore Wind Constitutional Amendment FAQs

## Ballot Language

*"Do you support an amendment to require that federal revenues received by the state generated from Outer Continental Shelf alternative or renewable energy production be deposited into the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund?"*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT IS THE "WIND AMENDMENT"?

The Constitutional Amendment provides that *federal* revenues received by Louisiana from Outer Continental Shelf alternative or renewable energy production shall be deposited into the Coastal Trust Fund. It would amend the current state law already dedicating federal oil and gas revenues to the coastal trust fund to also include offshore renewable and alternative energy sources. This state constitutional amendment will be on the ballot on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### WHAT THIS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT DOES NOT DO

- Does not take money from the state General Fund or away from other important state projects and programs.
- Not slow or disincentivize the production of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico
- Not a subsidy for wind energy production in the Gulf of Mexico
- WILL NOT increase the cost of doing business for energy companies in the Gulf of Mexico

Passing this amendment means that *if and when* alternative energy production occurs in the waters off Louisiana's coast *AND* federal law changes to allow for sharing qualifying revenues from that production, those federal dollars will be dedicated to the Coastal Trust Fund for use on coastal master plan projects that will protect and restore our coast and communities.

### HOW WILL THIS BENEFIT LOUISIANA'S COASTAL PROGRAM IF PASSED ON NOVEMBER 5TH?

Only one offshore lease sale has occurred so far in the Gulf of Mexico so it is difficult to predict how the alternative and renewable industries will grow in the future or how large of a financial impact it would

have for the coastal trust fund. But, what is clear is that without a change in federal law and this constitutional amendment, none of that funding will support the protection or restoration of our coast.

While dollar amounts are small today, passage of this amendment would send a clear message that all types of energy produced off our coast depend on a healthy and resilient coast and should contribute to its protection and restoration. It would present a powerful argument to federal lawmakers that Louisiana will invest additional OCS revenues it receives wisely, and it would be a critical first step toward shrinking the coastal program's upcoming funding gap.

## **WHAT ABOUT RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE THE COASTAL AREA? HOW DO THEY BENEFIT FROM THIS OR WHAT OPTIONS DO THEY HAVE FOR FUTURE FUNDING FOR THEIR NEEDS?**

A functional Louisiana coastline not only protects against physical damage for those who live there but protects the economy of the entire state from the impacts of hurricanes and sea level rise. The coastal crisis affects homes and home values, unique and rich cultural traditions, threatens major economic engines and assets like oil and gas refineries, manufacturing complexes, pipelines, and ports, threatens navigation, harms our fisheries, and casts a pall over Louisiana's efforts to attract tourists and business development.

Additionally, during committee hearings on this Constitutional Amendment, the author and other legislators discussed the idea of a similar bill taking shape to capture onshore revenue from wind, solar and other alternative energy sources similar in nature to this bill. The goal there would be to have a fund where that money could go for priorities in north and central Louisiana.

## **WHAT ABOUT BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE BEING HARMED BY OFFSHORE WIND?**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) identified options for offshore wind energy development in the Gulf of Mexico that do a good job of avoiding serious impacts to wildlife and habitats. The sites are all more than 20 miles offshore, are far from the footprint of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, and avoid critical Rice's whale habitat areas. Louisianans can feel confident that offshore wind energy resources can be developed effectively in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico, with far less impact on wildlife and habitat than from oil and gas development. National Wildlife Federation supports the responsible development of offshore wind energy, and works closely with regulators and the industry to ensure wildlife are protected at every step of the development process.

# Reactive Messaging

## WHAT ABOUT BIRDS?

Responsible offshore wind development begins with avoiding areas with the highest potential impact to birds and other wildlife. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management selected federal lease areas for offshore wind that are the least likely to be used by seabirds, thanks to years of surveys and analysis. Under favorable conditions, data indicates that migrating birds fly over the Gulf at altitudes much higher than wind turbines, and avian monitoring technology is helping to better inform this notion , and more on that is below.

## WHAT ABOUT WHALES?

The areas designated for offshore wind development in federal waters are far from Rice's whale habitat and developers will need to adhere to strict regulations to minimize and mitigate impacts on any whales in their vicinity. As offshore wind developers draft construction and operations plans in the coming years, regulators, developers, and wildlife experts will work together to implement risk-reduction measures such as installing foundations that require less pile driving (or none at all), technology like bubble curtains to reduce construction noise, avoiding nighttime transit, monitoring zones around construction activity and pausing when whales get too close, and limiting impactful activities during times of highest risk.