

August 14, 2023

Jeffrey Willis, Executive Director and
Kevin Sloan, Coastal Policy
Coastal Resources Management Council
4808 Tower Holl Road, Suite 3
Wakefield, RI 02879

Dear Mr. Williams and Mr. Sloan:

This letter is regarding my full support for federal consistency certification filed with CRMC for the Sunrise Wind project. The development partnership of Ørsted and Eversource has addressed key fish and habitat concerns raised by many in the angling community.

Additionally, fishing in this wind farm area from the recreational fishing community is negligible, as evident by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute charter fishing industry survey I participated in that showed little to no fishing in the area. Private angling generally dovetails as to where recreational charter boats fish, particularly this far offshore.

I am a charter captain and angler that has been engaged with the offshore wind industry starting with the Block Island Wind Farm. I was part of the team from the RI Party & Charter Boat Association that negotiated a \$200,000 marketing grant to bolster charter fishing in the shoulder seasons for fishing loss during the construction of the Block Island Wind Farm.

Presently I am a board member of the American Saltwater Guides Association, an active member of the RI Saltwater Anglers and former board officer for ten years, most recent past vice chair of the RI Marine Fisheries Council, vice chair of the Narraganset Bay Estuary Program steering committee, and a member of the RI Party & Charter Boat Association.

I am a fishing writer for 15 blogs, newspapers, fishing magazines and weekly solicit input and communicate with thousands of anglers, charter captains, bait & tackle shop owners, industry experts as well as the fishing and boating public.

I thank CRMC, BOEM and Sunrise Wind for proposing and working on this project, without it we would miss out on badly needed renewable energy. The fish I catch today are vastly different in type and abundance due to climate change impacts. The fishing industry needs renewable energy to help stem the tide on negative climate impacts.

This was heard loud and clear last year at the URI/GSO Barid Symposium on “Climate Impacts on Recreational Fishing and Boating”. One after another, anglers, recreational fishing industry leaders and members from the RI Saltwater Anglers Association, and area charter captains testified how they are being impacted by climate. And, scientists, including the chief science officer at NOAA and a host of others explained why we as anglers are experiencing these climate impacts.

We need Sunrise Wind to help stem the tide on climate impacts.

Sunrise Wind partners have acknowledged the importance of private recreational fishing and has reached out to recreational anglers with leader interviews, surveys, in-person meetings, a series of online Fishinars throughout the pandemic, research in general and specifically for recreationally significant data poor stocks like false albacore as well as support for symposia like the Barid Symposium.

Recreational anglers are supportive of offshore wind, as long as wind farms are developed responsibly with research before, during and after construction.

Sunrise Wind is being responsibly developed with an aggressive research and monitoring plan in place that recreational fishers like me and commercial fishermen helped develop. The kind of research and monitoring plan every wind farm should have to measure positive or negative impacts.

Yes I say positive impacts as I and others believe offshore wind farms will have a major positive impact on habitat and fish.

A peer reviewed Meta-analysis of multiple fish abundance studies in European wind farms relates greater fish abundance inside offshore wind farms than outside the wind farms in control areas.

And at the BIWF recreational fishing there is good too, perhaps a bit better, even though fishing pressure in the area has increased 200 percent. Fishing there now includes large striped bass and bluefish in addition to scup, black sea bass, and nearby fluke and cod is commonly caught there. Spear fishermen dive on the pylons and rod & reel anglers are using eels to target striped bass right next to the pylons. At the Block Island Wind Farm gill nets, fish pots, trawlers and recreational fishermen all fish in the windfarm area as they should.

And, last year a seven year study conducted before, during and after construction of the Block Island Wind Farm was completed. Trawl areas in the wind farm and over cables as well as two control areas south and east of the wind farm were studied with monthly trawls in each area. Results showed that there was a greater abundance of cod and black sea bass in the wind farm area and everything else was even. Meaning if squid was up or down in control areas it was up or down by a similar amount in the wind farm.

The reef effect of foundations and associated scour protection will have a major positive impact on fishing at Sunrise Wind, just as it has had at Block Island.

To summarize, I believe not much recreational fishing (private or for hire) occurs in the Sunrise Wind farm today. My hope is that pylons will enhance fishing there as it has done in Europe and at the Block Island Wind Farm as science tells us. More fish is a good thing for recreational and commercial fishers.

I understand negative impacts during construction, and fishermen should be compensated, but existing science and experience tells us there will be no long term negative impacts, but rather positive impacts to fishing.

As evident by the Sunrise Wind farm environmental statement, impacts will be negligible and often temporary. I urge CRMC to approve the Sunrise Wind farm for consistency certification and allow this project to be built to generate the energy that is needed, while being sensitive to the environment and helping us stem the tide on climate impacts.

Once again thank you and I am grateful for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Capt. David P. Monti

No Fluke Fishing LLC

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