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Connecticut Wind Collaborative launches to lead promotion of regional offshore wind industry

(GROTON CT) – Today, the Connecticut Wind Collaborative announced its official launch and formation of an initial Board of Directors, as a continuation of the state’s efforts at the forefront of offshore wind energy development along the East Coast.

The creation of the Wind Collaborative was first announced last October as part of [Connecticut’s Offshore Wind Strategic Roadmap](#), which calls for the new nonprofit to work collaboratively with business, industry, academia, across state agencies and alongside stakeholders in neighboring states to advance the regional supply chain and workforce necessary to meet the growing demand for this green, sustainable, domestic energy supply.

In addition to supporting and promoting offshore wind activities taking place across the state and executing work identified by the Roadmap, the Wind Collaborative will work in conjunction with neighboring states to establish and lead an inclusive regional offshore wind industry cluster. Clusters are critical to economic development because they foster collaboration and boost competitiveness within an industry or geographic area. A Connecticut wind industry cluster will offer a centralized critical mass of expertise and shared resources to support growth, attract investment and talent, and foster innovation, across Connecticut and throughout New England.

Paul Lavoie, the state’s Chief Manufacturing Officer, was elected by board members to serve as Chairperson and Treasurer during an incorporation meeting earlier this month. Andrew Lavigne, Manager of the state’s Clean Economy Program at the Department of Economic and Community Development, and Kate Aufhauser, the Governor’s Strategic Advisor for Economic Development, will serve as co-vice chairs. Paul Whitescarver, Executive Director of the Southeastern CT Enterprise Region

(seCTer) and former Commander of Submarine Base New London, was the Wind Collaborative's Incorporator and will serve as Secretary.

In the spirit of the Wind Collaborative's commitment to multi-state cooperation, the board also includes William Cox, Vice President of Business Development and Investment at Rhode Island Commerce. The board has formed a Nominating Committee that will embark on a search for the board's remaining 10 members to be recruited from across industry, private sector, academia and government.

Following approval at the initial board meeting, the Wind Collaborative announced the start of its search for a full-time Executive Director, with an on-board target date of April. The requirements for this position can be viewed [here](#). The Wind Collaborative is also in the process of soliciting quotes from marketing firms to provide organizational branding and for website development services.

The Wind Collaborative is being incubated within the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer). seCTer and the Wind Collaborative have entered into a Shared Services Agreement, through which seCTer will provide office space, financial and administrative support to the Wind Collaborative to ensure stability of the new nonprofit organization's operations. seCTer is a private non-profit and is the region's designated U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Economic Development District. Operating in the region for three decades, seCTer has a proven track record of incubation and start-up assistance, providing business advising and financial support to businesses.

Seed funding for the Wind Collaborative includes \$577,500 from the joint venture of Ørsted and Eversource, as part of their supply chain and workforce development commitments tied to their Revolution Wind project.

"The Connecticut Wind Collaborative will have an important role in helping to guide the development of an offshore wind economy in our state," said Governor Ned Lamont. "Right now, throughout the United States, the offshore wind industry is seeking locations to grow and expand, and Connecticut has the opportunity to add hundreds of new good-paying jobs in this sector. We must work to ensure that Connecticut builds an offshore wind ecosystem that boosts local economies and spurs investment while also providing consumers with a source of clean, reliable, and affordable power."

"We are very excited to launch the Connecticut Wind Collaborative. The Wind Collaborative will bring stakeholders across the region together to support the growing U.S. offshore wind industry," said Lavoie, who also serves as Connecticut's Chief Manufacturing Officer. "Offshore wind is an important component of Governor Lamont's drive toward renewable energy sources to combat climate change. The Wind Collaborative is going to be the catalyst for growth in offshore wind by putting Connecticut at the epicenter of a regional coordinated effort. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stand up a new industry in Connecticut and the region and the Wind Collaborative will be at the forefront of that effort.

"Connecticut has established itself as a leader in the offshore wind industry, thanks to its foresight, its commitment to the fight against climate change, and its willingness to invest in the local jobs and infrastructure needed to grow this new American industry," said Nicole Verdi, Head of Government Affairs & Policy, New England, Ørsted. "Ørsted is proud to support the Connecticut Wind Collaborative as we work together to grow the industry across the region, drive economic development and job creation, and meet clean energy goals."

“Connecticut’s Offshore Wind Strategic Roadmap emphasizes collaboration and how crucial it is to accelerate the equitable and sustainable growth of the region’s clean energy future,” said Ray Collins, Manager of Government Affairs, Eversource. “At Eversource, we firmly believe collaboration is critical to ensuring a cleaner, healthier future for everyone, and we are excited to support the Connecticut Wind Collaborative’s mission in the coming years as we bring more clean, renewable offshore wind energy to New England’s electric grid.”

Connecticut leads in US offshore wind

Connecticut is already a leader in the US offshore wind industry. Connecticut’s strategic investment in its port infrastructure, complemented by more than \$100 million in private sector funding, resulted in State Pier Terminal in New London being the only active East Coast offshore wind turbine marshaling terminal with unobstructed access to the ocean. Despite recent setbacks to multiple East Coast offshore wind projects, including one Connecticut project, Connecticut remains one of the few U.S. states actively supporting deployment of offshore wind with multiple additional projects already in the queue for assembly and deployment over the next several years.

Components for the nation’s first commercial-scale offshore wind farm to deliver power to the grid, South Fork Wind, continue to be assembled at and shipped from State Pier Terminal in the Port of New London. The 12-turbine South Fork Wind project started delivering power to the New York grid in December. The State of Connecticut, State of Rhode Island and State of New York each play unique and complementary roles supporting this first of three Ørsted and Eversource joint venture projects already scheduled for marshaling from the terminal.

Components for the 65-turbine Revolution Wind, also being developed by Ørsted and Eversource, are scheduled to begin arriving at State Pier this spring. Revolution Wind will generate enough clean energy to power more than 350,000 Connecticut and Rhode Island homes beginning in 2025. Revolution Wind will be located 32 miles southeast of the Connecticut shoreline, 15 miles south of Rhode Island, and 12 miles southwest of Martha’s Vineyard.

Sunrise Wind, comprised of more than 80-turbines, will provide 924 MW of clean, sustainable energy to power nearly 600,000 homes. Sunrise Wind is tentatively scheduled to be operational in 2025.

In September 2023, the White House announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between nine East Coast states (Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island) and four federal agencies (the Departments of Energy, Interior, Commerce, and Transportation) to support efforts of the Federal-State Offshore Wind Implementation Partnership to strengthen regional collaboration on domestic offshore wind supply chain development.

In October 2023, Gov. Lamont, and the Governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, announced a New England offshore wind multi-state coordination memorandum of understanding – the first of its kind in the nation. This MOU creates a pathway for a coordinated selection of offshore wind projects as each state solicits wind energy generation through their respective procurements. Under the plan, the states agreed to coordinate their solicitations for proposals from offshore wind farm developers. Although each state will run its own procurements, the agreement is intended to allow developers to save money by bidding larger projects across three states and reaching a broader market. Responses to all three states’ solicitations are due March 27, 2024.