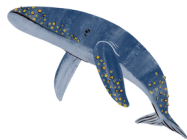


8 Myths about Offshore Wind (OSW)

Truth: The biggest threat to the marine environment is doing nothing.

Climate change has caused ocean temperatures to rise, which is wreaking havoc on critical habitats for whales, fish, and other marine life. In Rhode Island, an increase in violent weather has caused flooding and massive beach erosion while distant wildfires have transformed the clear summer sky into a choking brown haze.

Opponents of offshore wind want you to believe wind turbines will destroy the marine environment, but their argument is based on a willful distortion of the facts.



Myth: Offshore wind is killing whales

Truth: There is zero scientific evidence that offshore wind kills whales. More than 200 whales have died in the region since 2016, and 80% of those deaths were caused by collisions with ships or entanglement in fishing nets. The remaining 20% were too decomposed to autopsy. Not a single whale death has been attributed to offshore wind.

Opponents claim construction noise damages whale hearing and their ability to navigate. In reality, the sonar used to map the ocean floor is not strong enough to damage whale hearing. During the louder pile-driving phase, companies are required to surround the construction area with bubble curtains to mute the noise. They are also required to halt construction when whales are in the area.



Myth: OSW will harm birds

Truth: The National Audubon Society supports offshore wind. Doesn't that say it all? Audubon says that offshore wind will have a "net positive effect on bird life" because the biggest threat to bird life is climate change.



Myth: OSW will "Industrialize" the continental shelf

Truth: This inflammatory language is designed to produce fear and outrage. The word "industrialize" conjures up images of factories belching toxic smoke and chemicals into the environment. Wind turbines will produce neither.

Yes, the turbines are going to be very tall, but they are also going to be more than a dozen miles offshore and a mile apart. They will be silent, barely visible, and non-polluting. Is that what you think of when someone says "industrialization?"



Myth: Federal regulators have approved killing more than 100 whales

Truth: Federal regulators have not approved the killing of a single whale. The false assertion by wind opponents is based on an intentional distortion of the word "take" used in federal regulatory documents.

Opponents claim the term means "kill," when in fact, it means "bother." The "takes" approved by federal regulators are Level B (potential to disturb without serious harm). There are zero approvals to kill marine mammals.



Myth: OSW will hurt the economy

Truth: Three states—RI, MA, and CT— are slated to share a group of OSW projects that will create more than 10,000 jobs and provide enough electricity to power 2 million homes.

In addition, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, will improve national security and make our economy less vulnerable to international disputes. OSW will also shield consumers from the wild price fluctuations of fossil fuels, which has already caused a spike in electric rates.

Any comparison of OSW to fossil fuels must also factor in the cost natural disasters and rocketing insurance rates, caused by continued climate change.



Myth: OSW will lower property values

Truth: On Block Island and in Denmark where wind farms are up and running, studies have shown no adverse impact on waterfront property values. Remember, the turbines are going to be 12 to 24 miles offshore. On a clear day, the closest turbines will be visible on the distant horizon and in a typical summer haze they will be invisible.

Opponents argue that offshore wind is pointless because it won't solve climate change. Of course it won't. No single action is going to reverse 200 years of fossil fuel pollution. It will take a variety of solutions to save our planet, and wind power is a major piece of that puzzle.

-- Bill ibelle for Citizens' Climate Lobby RI and Climate Action Rhode Island



Myth: OSW will do nothing to slow climate change

Truth: OSW will reduce greenhouse emissions by replacing energy now produced by fossil fuel plants. Although we will still need backup about 20 percent of the time (when the wind does not blow hard enough), improving battery technology will further reduce those backup needs.

Opponents claim the government has admitted that OSW will have “no collective impact on global warming.” But this six-word sentence fragment is taken out of context from a 400-page government report. What the report actually concludes is that OSW will have “no collective **adverse** impact on global warming.” One word makes all the difference.



Myth: OSW will hurt tourism

Truth: Wind turbines on the distant horizon aren't likely to deter tourists from touring the Newport mansions or flocking to Waterfire in Providence.

In keeping with their deceptive footnoting, opponents cite an article in EuropeNow as proof that OSW will damage tourism. What they don't tell you is that the article is about land-based wind turbines in northern England and makes no mention whatsoever of offshore wind. Apparently they didn't bother to read the article either, because it concludes that “research found no evidence suggesting that tourists are either positively or negatively affected by the development of onshore-windfarms.”