

December 14, 2011

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr.
House Speaker Michael Busch
Annapolis, Maryland



Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch,

We are writing you today as concerned leaders from Maryland's labor, faith, health, conservation, education, minority enterprise, business development, grocery, and women's advocacy communities. We are writing you to say we, like Marylanders everywhere, are concerned about the future of our communities, our economy, and our ailing planet.

But we are not writing to catalogue a long list of problems. Instead, we are writing to say we believe there is a solution within the grasp of our General Assembly that can bring jobs and economic opportunity to our state while improving public health and protecting our planet from the ravages of climate change. That solution is clean, renewable, offshore wind power. Our message is simple: Offshore wind works for Maryland.

Maryland cannot afford to sit idly by while a virtual Persian Gulf of wind power sits off our Atlantic coast. We cannot sit idly by while Europe has constructed 43 offshore wind farms to date and our neighboring states of Massachusetts and New Jersey are moving forward with their own ocean-based wind energy plans. We cannot sit idly by while skilled laborers and manufacturers can't find work in our state. We cannot sit idly by when children with asthma are struggling to breathe on Code Orange air quality days, thus making this a moral issue in need of a moral solution. We cannot sit idly by while greenhouse gases from fossil fuels pollute our atmosphere at truly dangerous levels.

It is time, during the General Assembly session just ahead, to take action. We sincerely thank Gov. O'Malley for his leadership in sponsoring a strong and visionary offshore wind bill in 2011. Unfortunately, that legislation did not receive a vote. Had it passed, the legislation would have incentivized construction of a moderate-sized wind farm off the coast of Ocean City that would have: 1) Created an estimated 2,400 jobs. 2) Created enough electricity to power most of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. 3) Stimulated \$1.9 billion in net economic gain in the state. 4) Saved 700 lives from pollution over 25 years and saved the state \$4 billion in avoided health costs. 5) Kept nearly one million tons of global warming pollution out of the atmosphere annually.

No wonder 62 percent of Maryland voters in a statewide Gonzales poll in October said they were ready to invest in offshore wind right now.

Gov. O'Malley has pledged to introduce a similar bill in 2012, and we strongly urge you – as leaders of the Senate and House -- to make swift passage of this bill a top priority.

We urge you to include in the bill features that guarantee maximum opportunities for Maryland's diverse array of workers, entrepreneurs, and communities, and that promotes the creation of good, local union jobs. And we urge you to pass a bill that offers prudent protections for all ratepayers, especially Marylanders of limited means.

The insurmountable fact is this: Offshore wind works for Maryland. It works for our economy. It works for jobs. It works for our health. It works for our clean-energy laws. It works for our national security.

As leaders of the Maryland Senate and House for many years, you have both been stalwart champions of clean energy at every level. Now we ask you to do everything in your power in 2012 to help launch, forever, Maryland's promising offshore wind future.

Sincerely,

Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland of the Episcopal Church

Nancy Soreng, President, Maryland League of Women Voters

Rod Easter, President, Baltimore Building and Construction Trade Council

Joe Gaskins, Director, Economic Development and Training Institute

Karla Raettig, Executive Director, Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Susan Jones, Executive Director, Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association

Jim Strong, Sub District Director, United Steelworkers of Maryland

Mike Tidwell, Director, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Katie Huffling, Environmental Health Education Center, University of Maryland School of Nursing*

Tammy Lunn, President, D&T Welding Company

Charis Egland-Smith, MOM's Organic Markets

Tommy Landers, Campaign Director, Environment Maryland

Ross Tyler, Business Coalition for Maryland Offshore Wind

Josh Tulkin, Director, Maryland Chapter, Sierra Club

*The content of this letter reflects the view of the signer and does not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the University of Maryland School of Nursing.