

Green Oceans Leads Federal Lawsuit Challenging Sunrise Wind Project

March 30, 2026

LITTLE COMPTON, R.I. – Green Oceans, along with a coalition of plaintiffs, including the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head–Aquinnah and the Narragansett Indian Tribes, commercial fishermen, and coastal stakeholders, filed a new lawsuit in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, challenging federal approvals for the Sunrise Wind offshore wind project (Case No. 1:26-cv-01006). Plaintiffs assert direct and ongoing injuries to navigation, fishing, cultural resources, and long-standing uses of the waters. The complaint alleges violations of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Under OCSLA, BOEM must ensure that offshore wind projects do not compromise safety, threaten national security, interfere with reasonable uses, or deplete ocean resources. The complaint, filed on March 24, 2026, asserts that these requirements were not met prior to approval and remain unresolved.

Thomas Stavola Jr., Esq., counsel for the plaintiffs, stated: “The government approved this offshore wind project under a fallacious OCSLA interpretation that allows the agency to weigh perceived, yet unproven 'benefits' of the project against the litany of legitimate, concrete harms. The current interpretation prohibits that, but BOEM has, to date, neglected to take the necessary action to review and rescind approvals.”

Under scrutiny is Sunrise Wind’s ‘open-loop cooling system’ (CWIS) that intakes 8 million gallons of seawater a day and discharges it back into the ocean, injected with chlorine and heated to 90 degrees, killing everything entrained in the process.

Green Oceans Director Michael Lombardi stated that, “Inshore energy-generating facilities have been permanently shut down for similar open-loop cooling systems, given their annihilation of planktonic life. Offshore, this represents a severe threat to areas where primary productivity is critically important.”

Bonnie Brady, policy director for the New England Fishermen’s Stewardship Association, a co-plaintiff in the case, commented, “These projects put fishermen at risk. For fishermen, safety is not optional. It is the difference between working and not working, and in some cases, life and death. When safety risks are identified and not addressed, fishermen are forced into conditions where safety is compromised, and lives are put at risk, exactly what OCSLA was written to prevent.”



<https://green-oceans.org>

*P.O. Box 976
Little Compton, RI 02478*

On Friday, March 20, Green Oceans and its coalition survived a motion to dismiss in their Lawsuit against the South Fork Wind project (Case No. 1:23-cv-03510-APM). Judge Mehta ruled that plaintiffs had both standing and a live case under the Clean Water Act.

About Green Oceans

Founded in 2023, Green Oceans is a 501(c)3 nonprofit community organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the ocean and the life it supports. Green Oceans and its coalition, which includes Native American tribes, environmental, energy, national security, and fishing groups, have worked to challenge large-scale offshore wind development based on its documented impacts on marine ecosystems, energy costs, livelihoods, and national security.

Media Contact: media@green-oceans.org and barbara@green-oceans.org.