

Offshore wind would boost jobs, energy more than oil: study

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Developing offshore wind in the Atlantic could lead to 91,000 more jobs in the next two decades than offshore drilling, an environmental group says

Developing offshore wind technology in the Atlantic Ocean would produce twice the energy and job growth as drilling for oil would, an environmental group said Wednesday.

The analysis by Oceana was released ahead of the US government's

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's five-year plan for [oil](#) and gas leasing, which could involve seismic testing for potential reserves in the Atlantic.

"The main crux of the report is we don't even need to consider [offshore drilling](#) when we consider the vast offshore wind resources we have in the Atlantic," said Andrew Menaquale, report author and energy analyst at Oceana.

Menaquale said less than four percent of the United States' oil and gas is found in the offshore Atlantic.

The group's report said that "energy created by 20 years of offshore wind in the Atlantic would produce nearly twice as much energy, (five billion barrels of oil equivalents) than what would be created by all of the economically recoverable oil and gas."

It also found that offshore wind in the Atlantic could lead to 91,000 more jobs in the next two decades than offshore drilling.

The group said the oil industry "exaggerated" its projections for growth by including "oil and gas resources that are not economically recoverable, thereby inflating the potential benefits."

The administration of US President Barack Obama said last year it would consider proposals for the use of seismic airguns to probe for oil and gas deposits below the ocean floor from Delaware to Florida, an area that had previously been off-limits.

Oceana opposes the use of seismic airguns because their loud sounds can pose dangers to marine life.

"Based on the government's own estimates, seismic blasting in the

Atlantic could harm fish populations while injuring as many as 138,000 marine mammals like whales and dolphins, disturbing the vital activities of as many as 13.5 million more," said Menaquale.

While the United States does not yet have any operation offshore wind facilities, momentum is building in that area.

The first wind farm off Rhode Island is expected to be up and running the next year, and large areas off the coast of Massachusetts will be bid on later this month.

In the US, "offshore wind is sort of a foreign concept," Menaquale told AFP.

"If you were to talk to people in northern Europe their ability to generate offshore wind resources is well known. In east Asia, it is becoming highly developed as well."

Menaquale said he is hopeful that, once offshore wind becomes better known in the United States, people will realize its clean [energy](#) potential.

"The upcoming proposed five-year plan for [offshore oil](#) and [gas](#) is coming up, and we really hope that places like the Atlantic are not included in that plan," he added.

"And if they are included we hope they are removed at a later date."

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