

# Full-go for NC wind farm that politicians claimed is threat

February 9 2017, by Emery P. Dalesio

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North Carolina's first large-scale wind farm is fully operational despite efforts by some of the state's most powerful politicians to shut down the \$400 million project as a possible national security threat.

Avangrid Renewables said Thursday its 104 [wind turbines](#) reaching 50-stories tall are now generating enough electricity for 60,000 homes. Amazon is buying the power produced in rural, northeastern North Carolina to run its Virginia data centers.

Ten North Carolina legislators including state House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger previously urged President Donald Trump's administration to shut down the wind farm because it's too close to a long-distance surveillance radar installation. The Navy radar in nearby Chesapeake, Virginia, scans hundreds of miles into the Atlantic and Caribbean for ships and planes.

The Pentagon said last month the two operations can coexist. The company said it trimmed the size of the project, positioned turbines differently, and conducted extensive modeling with the military's scientists to avoid conflicting with the radar array.

Moore appears to have softened his initial criticism of the wind farm after touring the site with other legislators on Jan. 24. A statement dated that day quotes Moore as saying: "It appears the initial concerns raised by the military are being addressed. I agree with the Navy that further research is critical to ensure this project does not create conflicts with

our critical military operations on the coast."

Moore's spokesman Joseph Kyzer has ignored multiple requests to provide The Associated Press a copy of the statement. The AP acquired it from other sources. Berger's spokeswoman did not respond to emails Thursday asking whether the Eden Republican's concern about the wind farm continues.

A 2014 agreement between Avangrid, a U.S. subsidiary of Spanish clean-energy giant Iberdrola S.A., and the Navy said although there is potential for conflict between the wind farm and the radar array, the Pentagon also sought to enhance the country's renewable energy resources. The agreement specified placement of the project's wind turbines and an understanding that the company would curtail operations "for a national security or defense purpose."

In their letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, North Carolina lawmakers claimed that the Pentagon dropped opposition to the wind farm because of the "political correctness" of outgoing President Barack Obama's administration. Kelly, a retired Marine general, raised concerns about the placement of the wind farm in 2014, while serving as the head of U.S. Southern Command.

"In our opinion, due to the consequences at stake, this wind project should never have been permitted to be built," the letter said.

In asking that the wind project be permanently scrapped, the Republicans also noted that the company that would be most harmed is foreign owned.

But the Navy said it plans to work with its new neighbor.

"While initial studies indicated a potential conflict between the Amazon

wind project and the ROTH, additional data collected since that time determined that the project is not likely to affect the mission," Navy spokesman Lt. Chika Onyekanne said last month.

Trump has long expressed opposition to wind turbines, tweeting about them more than 60 times over the years. Trump has battled the construction of an offshore [wind project](#) he says mars the view from his golf resort in Scotland. At a campaign rally in August, he criticized both solar panels and wind turbines, which he said pose a lethal threat to wildlife.

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