

The Socioeconomic Implications of Offshore Wind Implementation in New Jersey

Jessica Parineet



INTRO

Offshore wind projects present a valuable opportunity for policymakers to address socioeconomic inequity in New Jersey by delivering the benefits of increased economic activity to underserved communities. Assessing the actions institutions have taken to achieve equitable outcomes and mitigate potential negative impacts is key to developing future policy priorities.

METHODS

- Developed a framework to operationalize the concept of socioeconomic equity. Final evaluation is organized by the following sub-topics: climate justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and energy burden.
- Conducted literature review of academic sources, government reports, current state plans, offshore wind related legislative and regulatory documents, and analysis of relevant examples from the EU and UK.

RESULTS

Relevant institutions have achieved progress within all four sub-topics. However, there are additional opportunities to maximize the positive impacts of this industry and spur momentum for system-wide decarbonization.

DISCUSSION

Recommendations for future policy priorities include collecting data that will clearly quantify the benefits historically marginalized communities receive moving forward, developing mandatory protocols for allocating community benefit funds, and creating a statewide, cross-sector just transition plan.

Sub-Topic

Key Takeaways

Economic Justice

New Jersey has made strides in maximizing economic benefits and equitable distribution through grant programs, investments, and partnerships. Enhancing this approach involves assessing outcomes via data collection and iterating future strategies to better secure results for target groups.

Climate Justice

Executive Orders and leadership from regulatory agencies have driven offshore wind implementation, but legislation codifying targets with a just transition framework will offer greater long-term climate certainty and financing benefits.

Energy Burden

Projected utility bill increases for residential customers indicate that offshore wind costs won't be distributed progressively. Community benefit funds, if following mandated protocols, can ensure transparent and prioritized distribution of benefits aligned with community needs.

Environmental Justice

Despite the many climate and environmental justice benefits of a clean energy transition, opponents of offshore wind often cite environmental concerns, indicating the state must make public perception and communication of benefits a research priority.

Contact Information: Jessica.Parineet@Rutgers.edu

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS: Rutgers University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I would like to thank Dr. Mark Paul for his ongoing support.