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September 22, 2023

Via email: susan.you@mass.gov

MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program
Attn: Susan You
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Salem Wind Port Chapter 91 License Application

Dear Ms. You,

Boston Harbor Now respectfully submits the following comments on the Salem Wind Port Chapter 91 License Application submitted by Crowley Wind Services, Inc. Our organization has been following this project and previously submitted written feedback on the Expanded Environmental Notification Form.

Boston Harbor Now has been a long-time champion of working waterfronts, with their unique geography and specialized jobs, and we are committed to ensuring that the waterfront we build today is designed for a more resilient and inclusive future. We envision that Designated Port Areas (DPAs) around the Commonwealth will support the existing and future marine industries that strengthen our region and prepare for the challenges climate change will bring. We expect that robust working port areas will work with their neighboring communities and provide local residents with job and educational opportunities that allow both to flourish.

The Salem Offshore Wind Terminal is a model example of how underutilized DPAs can be transformed into job-generating land uses that support the environment and the economy. Located in the Salem DPA, the facility utilizes the remaining space not occupied by the natural gas-fired power plant to create a wind-marshaling terminal to support New England's offshore wind development. To do this, the proponent will construct a new pile-supported lead-out wharf and pile-supported delivery pier, stabilize the existing ground, and construct several small accessory-use buildings. Although it will not generate energy itself, the new facility will help the expansion of offshore wind by providing a nearby space for the receiving, storage, assembly, and shipment of wind turbine generators. In addition to supporting a vital industry that will help Massachusetts reach its decarbonization goals, this project is expected to provide additional benefits to the City of Salem.



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Economic Development and Additional Public Benefits

The project's construction is expected to create approximately 100 jobs and once the Wind Port is in full operation, it will employ about 200 people. In previous filings, the proponent has stated that they intend to work with local colleges, non-profits, and academies to provide Global Wind Offshore certified training, which we look forward to seeing realized in anticipation of growing demand for these skills beyond this specific project. The project is also expected to boost the tourism industry in Salem. The proposed reconstruction of the wharf will allow large cruise ships to berth in Salem, which has not been possible since 2019 due to the instability of the existing wharf. To further support cruise activity, there will be a dedicated gated pedestrian path for cruise ship passengers to walk between the load out wharf and the Salem Wharf ferry terminal parking lot. Interpretive signage and publicly accessible open space along the western and southern sides of the site will also create a more inviting atmosphere for tourists and residents alike.

We support the Salem Wind Port and are excited for all the benefits this project is expected to deliver, from local job creation and tourism expansion to the support of statewide decarbonization efforts. We hope to see more projects that replicate the land uses and benefits of the Salem Offshore Wind Terminal in other DPAs around Boston Harbor and the commonwealth. Though the Salem DPA has some exceptional attributes that make it a strong candidate for offshore wind support, like its access to deep water, large size, and freedom from any height restrictions or clearances, we believe that other DPAs have a role to play in supporting a new blue and green economy. We must be thoughtful about our remaining DPAs and preserve them for future use.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project and are excited to see such an exemplary DPA use come to the waterfront in Greater Boston. Offshore wind will be vital to the Commonwealth's pursuit of decarbonization, and we hope that DPAs are protected accordingly. We would be happy to speak with you further if there are additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Abbott".

Kathy Abbott
President and CEO
Boston Harbor Now