PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST TRANSITION IN OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

By UPROSE, Rogue Climate, Taproot Earth, and Climate Justice Alliance

This framework, an adaptation of our Principles of Energy Democracy, serves as a foundation of how to support, partner, and work with climate justice organizations to be essential partners and decision makers for achieving a Just Transition via Offshore Wind Energy (OSWE) Development in coastal and the Big Lakes communities. As the Biden-Harris Administration accelerates the leasing of federal waters for offshore wind development, and project developers seek to gain access to these contracts, we must stand firm and demand the inclusion of historically marginalized host communities. This includes: Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, Environmental/Climate Justice communities, and low-income communities in the decision making of these public and private investments to create real and long-term community benefits.

How to Center Frontline Solutions and Co-Governance for Energy Affordability and Resiliency.

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How to Center Frontline Solutions and Co-Governance for Energy Affordability and Resiliency.

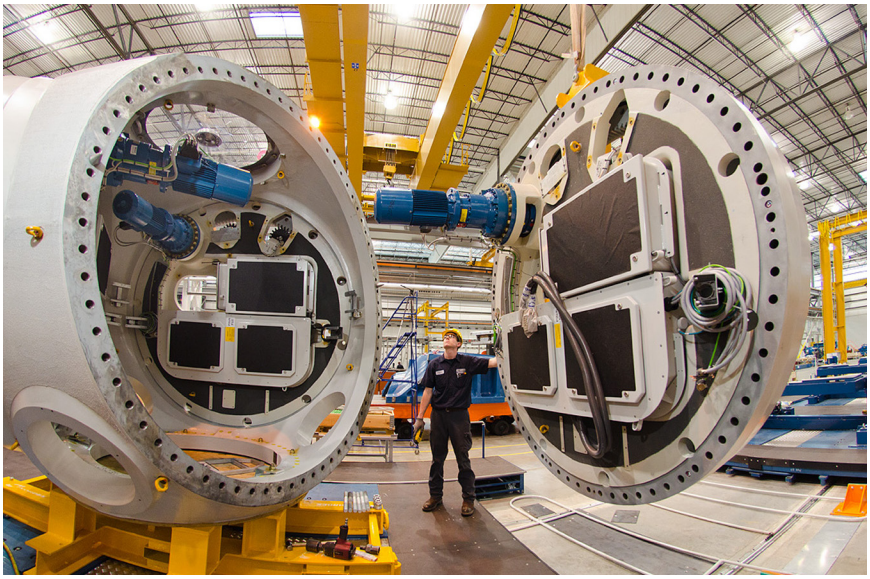
1. Energy Development as a Vehicle for Economic Justice and Human Rights: Environmental Justice (EJ) communities have experienced a legacy of health disparities for generations from shouldering the disproportionate burden of fossil fuel pollution and polluting infrastructure. Not only do fossil fuels cause a huge ecological damage to land, water, and air but they also create a health and safety hazard in Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities where they are overwhelmingly sited and the workers who maintain them. The development of renewable energies like offshore wind can create opportunities to:

- **a.** Transition existing fossil fuel infrastructure in EJ communities for renewable energy and energy storage alternatives
- **b.** Ensure local businesses are incentivized and supported to transition into the OSWE supply chain and provide information on timelines, challenges and opportunities
- **c.** Redress the ecological damage caused by the fossil fuel supply chain: mining, drilling, refining, transporting, spilling, and burning of fossil fuels.
- **d.** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and harmful co-pollutants that pose a risk to the health of local communities.
- **e.** Invest in local training, workforce, and hiring opportunities to prioritize historically marginalized communities
- **f.** Provide community and shared ownership of local clean energy systems and promote climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience to frontline communities
- **g.** Recognize and repair harm from the toxic legacy and relationship with dirty energy
- **h.** Advance community-led Just Transition goals
- **i.** Support State policy goals and mandates to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and meet clean energy and equity targets

2. Self-Determination in the Consultation Process: Free and Prior Informed Consent of Indigenous peoples and local historically marginalized communities is key to measure the impacts and benefits that a development of this magnitude would bring. This includes:

- **a.** Equitable and free access to information and access to justice in environmental matters is key for full participation in a consultation process.
- **b.** Listening sessions with the community members to determine maximum benefits before and as proposals are rolled out.
- **c.** Accountability measures, process, and timeline to incorporate and address impacted community concerns and priorities
- **d.** Inclusion of community voices and EJ communities in the different stages of permitting such as leasing, call areas, requests for proposal (RFPs) , and more submitted to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and to respective State agencies.
- **e.** Particular attention to the claims by Indigenous, Black, and immigrant communities and local fishing communities whose livelihoods depend on the viability of local marine ecosystems.
- **f.** Foster a culture of understanding that Indigenous sovereignty extends beyond territorial claims and includes access and management of the ocean. Also highlight that Black communities and many immigrant communities have a long history of

Water is Life - 2019 Climate Justice Youth Summit in Brooklyn. Photo by Rae Breaux



cultural connection with the waterfront

g. Seafood harvesting is an important industry and cultural institution in many coastal and Indigenous communities, and sustainable harvesting rights should be an important consideration when siting offshore wind.

3. Access To Renewable Energy Centered Around Communities: Offshore wind host communities (communities where wind projects are interconnecting, wind turbines are assembled, offshore wind supply chain activities, offshore wind ports, etc.) as well as the existing local businesses and local infrastructure, must be key beneficiaries of offshore wind investments and energy and an integral part of project decision-making. Not only could this provide more independence from the country's outdated national grid, but it could also strengthen energy resiliency and revamp local economies in coastal communities that have been underserved by energy developments at the federal level. Local communities' energy needs should be prioritized over industrial users.

4. Energy Affordability: Offshore wind lease sales have commanded even higher prices than oil and gas auctions. We must ensure that these costs aren't passed onto ratepayers to guarantee the profits of private utilities. Energy utilities should be publicly owned and funded through progressive taxation rather than regressive user fees. Where utilities remain privately owned, community benefit agreements should ensure that offshore wind lease revenues help offset local utility bills.

5. Job Access at Every Level: In order to achieve a just transition for workers, it is important to think about the workers throughout the various stages of OSWE development. Job development should also be grounded in racial and gender justice. Additionally, workforce development in coastal communities where these projects are proposed should be prioritized in order to ensure Offshore Wind jobs support sustainable local economies and careers. Training centers and resources must be economically and locationally accessible to historically marginalized host communities.

a. Create diverse and accessible career pathways for youth and young people, underpaid and underemployed workers, and existing local and small businesses

b. Job training and technical assistance for fossil fuel workers who wish to transition to OSWE, supported by local non-profits and academic institutions

- Transportation Jobs: Zero-emission electric vehicles for the transportation of raw materials and supply chains.
- Manufacturing Jobs: Production and assembly of the windmills, warehouse adaptations, and port adaptations.
- Installation: Technicians for the installation and port adaptations
- Maintenance: Wind Technicians for the turbines and offshore operations and the onshore port-related jobs

c. Offshore oil jobs are some of the most dangerous in the country, so we need the strongest possible protections of workers.

d. Project Labor Agreements can help make OSWE jobs safe and high-paying through collective bargaining.

6. Supply Chains and Life Cycles compatible with Zero Waste, Circular Economy Principles, and Ecological Mindfulness: While OSWE does not create greenhouse gasses emissions, its production, transportation, and maintenance can produce emissions and waste. We must advocate for local manufacturing in existing industrial areas to support, protect, and revitalize local production capacity where applicable and in accordance with local frontline community priorities to avoid transportation emissions. Regional manufacturing

can be an alternative when localized manufacturing may be detrimental to essential ecosystems and cultural resources of an area. We must seek ways to create windmill blades that are recyclable or can be repurposed at the end of their life cycles and are hurricane resilient.While we must support clean, local supply chains to the greatest extent possible, domestic manufacturing and hiring requirements should not be used in bad faith to delay OSWE development.

7. Acknowledgement of Wind Energy as part of the Commons: The waters and the air where offshore wind mills are sited must be recognized as public resources. That means the energy and profits generated by offshore wind should be publicly held as well. The United States should embrace models of community-owned development projects and state-owned development companies, which have already been implemented in other nations.

8. Rights of Nature and Ecological Mindfulness: The switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy will bring communities and society overall to a more balanced ecological relationship with Mother Earth. This transition should benefit not only communities, but also the natural environment when possible. Offshore turbines should be constructed to minimize impacts to wildlife and marine and estuarine ecosystems. (Landscape restoration)

9. Remediation: Legacy oil and gas infrastructure litters the ocean floor, especially in the Gulf of Mexico. This abandoned junk could interfere with offshore wind transmission lines and prevent offshore wind development in key regions. We should put people to work cleaning up the ocean floor to make communities whole again and aid transmission.

10. No False Solutions:

a. Carbon capture is expensive, energy-intensive, and has yet to work at scale in the United States. It's a technology that locks in reliance on fossil fuels and does nothing to reduce other harmful co-pollutants and carcinogens that come from fossil fuel combustion. Carbon capture pipelines can explode and kill people while also destroying coastal wetlands and/or competing with offshore wind transmission lines.

b. Hydrogen fuels are often produced with fracked gas, nuclear, or other fossil fuels and are reliant on carbon capture, which does not work. Blue,gray, and pink hydrogen emit more greenhouse gas emissions than coal. Burning hydrogen produces NOx, a pollutant that causes respiratory health impacts especially in environmental justice communities. Additionally, Hydrogen, even when produced using renewable energy, is very inefficient, losing 70% of renewable energy and consuming 9-18 tons of water per ton of H2. The Climate Justice Alliance does not support any form of hydrogen combustion.