

Methodology

The NC TOWERS Offshore Wind Stakeholder Survey is designed to gather feedback from key stakeholders, including the general public, regarding the responsible development of offshore wind energy in North Carolina.

The survey is not a statistically valid poll, rather it is intended to help the Taskforce and the Outreach & Engagement Subcommittee of the Taskforce identify information needs that stakeholders have on the topic of offshore wind, and to identify where the Taskforce has opportunity to engage with offshore wind stakeholders.

Questions designed to achieve these goals were developed by the members and staff of the Outreach & Engagement Subcommittee and approved by the Taskforce.

Feedback from the survey will inform the work of the NC TOWERS taskforce, which is charged with advising and providing recommendations to Governor Cooper and the N.C. General Assembly on the responsible development of offshore wind energy in North Carolina. Individual answers will not be shared. Answers from all stakeholders will be compiled into a summary report for the NC TOWERS taskforce.

NC TOWERS brings together representatives from government, industry, wildlife and environmental advocates, community leaders, and the military.

Members and staff of the Outreach Subcommittee worked with taskforce members to compile a list of 700+ key stakeholders from across the state. The link to participate in the survey was e-mailed twice to those on the stakeholder list. The survey link was also promoted on N.C. Department of Commerce social media channels, the NC TOWERS webpage, in a press release from the Governor's Office, and during N.C. TOWERS taskforce meetings which are livestreamed on the Commerce YouTube channel.

In addition, stakeholders were encouraged to share the link via e-mail and social media.

A second survey is planned for 2023.

Overview

We received 465 responses to the survey with a completion rate of 100%. While not every respondent answered every question, there were no dropouts.

Respondents were asked to self-identify with which stakeholder group(s) they identify. Respondents were able to select more than one category.

Just over half of respondents (51%) identified as environmental or wildlife advocates. Nearly half (49%) identified as “other”. The majority of “other” respondents self-identified as “coastal resident/homeowner/property owner.” Additional other self-identifications include “citizen/taxpayer,” and a few identified as “scientist/university”, “OSW industry” and “consultant.”

Five counties represent three-fourths (77%) of respondents. Forty-two percent of respondents live in Brunswick County. Thirteen percent live in Dare County. Eight percent live in Carteret County and eight percent live in Wake County. Six percent live in New Hanover County.

Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents (64%) said they are very interested in learning more about the responsible development of offshore wind energy in North Carolina. And one-fourth (25%) said they are somewhat interested.

More than half of those who responded (51%) report that members of their community have “minimal knowledge” on offshore wind, and 44% report community members are “somewhat knowledgeable”.

Sixty-one percent of respondents report that they have “some knowledge” on offshore wind and more than a quarter (28%) say they are “highly knowledgeable.”

More than one-third of respondents (36%) report they are “not sure” about the level of support among members of their community for the responsible development of offshore wind energy. Seventeen percent say community members “somewhat oppose” the responsible development of offshore wind and 26% say community members “strongly oppose” it. Seventeen percent say community members “somewhat support” the responsible development of offshore wind energy.

Two-thirds of survey respondents (68%, 317 individuals) said they would like to attend an offshore wind discussion in their community to learn more about the economic and environmental benefits of offshore wind for North Carolina and to share their feedback on the responsible development of offshore wind energy in our state.

Two-thirds of respondents (65%, 301 individuals) said they are interested in subscribing to our new newsletter on offshore wind.

Demographics

Fifty-nine percent of respondents were Baby Boomers (born before 1966). Twenty-eight percent were Gen X (born between 1966 and 1980). And 11% were Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996).

Eighty-nine percent of respondents identified as white. Six percent identified as black/African American. Five percent identified as American Indian/Alaska Native. And 3% identified as Hispanic/Latinx. Respondents were able to choose multiple groups.

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