

DEFEND OUR BEACHES NJ PLAYS KEY ROLE IN FIGHTING ATLANTIC CITY OFFICIALS' RUBER STAMPING OF APPROVALS FOR OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPER ATLANTIC

Atlantic City offshore wind opponents submit petition to put project on ballot

By Lynda Cohen | Thursday, January 9, 2025



The group opposing Atlantic City's Offshore Wind project are not taking yes for an answer.

They presented a petition to the City Clerk's Office this week with 2,092 signatures, according to leaders of the cause.

Solicitor Robert Tarver confirmed the petition's receipt to BreakingAC. He said that City Clerk Paula Geletei is in the process of a statutory review that "requires a diligent and thorough inspection of signatures."

He could not give a timeline for how long that could take. Once certified, it would be a matter of getting a referendum question on the ballot.

The required number is 15 percent of total voters in the last general assembly election, Tarver said. He did not have a number offhand.

But those who led the charge put the requirement at 801, with the number submitted more than 2½ times that.

The Atlantic Shores project has garnered much pushback, with residents and several people from outside the city coming out to Atlantic City Council meetings to voice their opposition.

The [Dec. 18 meeting included nearly 4½ hours of public comment](#) with the fire marshal blocking off the room as it reached maximum occupancy with more people looking to speak standing out in the hallway.

The plan would dig a line of cables through the Fifth Ward, with opponents alleging potential health risks and a negative impact on homes and streets in the ward.

But the pleas did not sway the supporters on City Council. The final approval passed 5-4, in what was the first meeting for newly elected Fifth Ward Councilwoman Maria Lacca.

Councilwoman LaToya Dunston, and Councilmen Jesse Kurtz and George Tibbitt also voted against the project.

"If members of our council are in favor of the project, then they should volunteer their streets to get ripped up," Lacca said in a news release about the petition. "Why should these cables go into my ward? My residents and I have sent a message loud and clear: We do not want this disaster waiting to happen. Send Offshores to another ward."

Members of the Committee of Petitioners that include newly elected Board of Education member Ron Bailey spearheaded the effort to collect signatures.

"The turnout for this petition is a clear indicator of how deeply the community cares about this issue," said Sherri Lilienfeld, the Community Awareness and Communications leader for DefendOurBeachesNJ.org. "Despite many families being out of town over the holiday season, and battling the extreme cold temperatures, residents rallied to show that their voice matters in decisions affecting their future."

Lacca said that more than 2,000 signatures "is a clear message that the people of Atlantic City are not willing to accept these changes without a fight."

Ordinance 74 grants permissions and easements to Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project 1, LLC for the development of an offshore wind energy project. The ordinance involves the installation of transmission facilities and related infrastructure through various public and city-owned properties, as well as Green Acres-protected land.

While proponents argue for the environmental and economic benefits of clean energy, residents have raised concerns about potential impacts on the community.

The petition calls for the ordinance to be suspended and subjected to further proceedings.



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UPDATE!

Since this report was released, the Atlantic City Clerk has verified that the petition includes the required number of resident voter signatures.