

Wrecking Ball in the Water: Fishermen, Environmental Groups Seek Injunction to Stop Empire Wind Project

Fishermen and environmental groups file for injunction to stop Empire Wind, citing marine harm, legal violations and foreign control by Norway's Equinor.

TRENTON, NJ, UNITED STATES, June 12, 2025
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Wrecking Ball in the Water: Fishermen, Processors, and Environmental Groups Seek Injunction to Stop Foreign-Owned "Death Star" Empire Wind Project

Today, a coalition of commercial fishermen, seafood processors, fish buyers, and environmental organizations from New Jersey to Massachusetts filed an emergency motion in U.S. District Court to stop construction of the Empire Wind 1 offshore wind project—citing imminent, irreversible harm to marine life, fishing grounds, the seafood supply chain, and coastal economies.

The motion seeks a preliminary injunction to immediately halt pile driving and construction activities. Plaintiffs argue the project threatens endangered whales, destroys seafloor habitat, and cripples a multi-generational American industry that provides food, jobs, and economic stability across the East Coast.

"To allow Empire Wind to continue construction is to abandon us fishermen and our coastal communities who have, for generations, fed our great country and kept local economies thriving," said Captain Shawn Machie of the F/V Capt. John in New Bedford, MA. "To turn a blind eye to the marine mammal deaths and destruction of ocean habitats is careless and shows a greed unlike any I've ever encountered."



It's all in the family as five generations of Lovgrens have worked the docks in Point Pleasant Beach, NJ.

The lawsuit (Protect Our Coast NJ et al. v. United States of America et al., Case No. 3:25-cv-06890) also challenges the project's legality under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA), as Empire Wind is controlled by Equinor—a company majority-owned by the Kingdom of Norway. U.S. law bars foreign governments from holding offshore energy leases. The Empire Wind 1 project was fast-tracked and approved under the Biden administration, which granted key permits and lease rights before leaving office, enabling a foreign state-owned company to destroy American waters so Norway can profit, despite widespread warnings from fishermen, scientists, and coastal communities.



Plaintiffs' vessels await another day working on the water. The boats are the Swaggy B, Lilly Rose and Amber Waves, all Fisherman's Dock Cooperative boats.

“The Fisherman’s Dock Cooperative in Point Pleasant Beach is one of the oldest and most successful fishing cooperatives in the country,” said Gus Lovgren, a generational fisherman and Coop spokesman. “For over 70 years, we’ve passed down our heritage and our commitment to sustainable fishing. But Empire Wind is a wrecking ball. It’s not just destroying our ocean, it’s destroying our future. It just took away our tomorrow.”

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The project would install 54 massive turbines and dump more than 3 billion pounds of rock onto the seafloor, a burial-level disruption that threatens vital habitat for scallops, squid, fluke, and other species. The plaintiffs warn that industrial ships like the Thialf, a foreign mega-

construction vessel dubbed the “Death Star of the Atlantic” are being brought in to build what would never be allowed in Norway’s own fishing waters.

“The ocean teems with life, especially in summer when marine animals reproduce and care for their young,” said Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action. “Impacts from pile driving are just horrendous--the powerful blasts and concussions disturb, harm, and kill marine life. This destructive impact must be stopped, now.”

The lawsuit also accuses the Department of the Interior of violating federal law when it abruptly lifted a stop-work order on April 16 without addressing the very environmental and safety risks

that prompted it.

“There are fewer than 350 North Atlantic right whales left on the planet,” said Amy DiSibio, board member of ACK for Whales. “Empire Wind was sited directly in their migratory path. This project should never have been permitted—and it must be stopped now.”

Last week, a worker was electrocuted during Empire Wind-related construction—raising urgent new concerns about oversight, safety failures, and the reckless pace of development.



Fishermen stand to lose their livelihoods if the Empire Offshore Wind Power Plant is constructed.

The plaintiffs are calling on the court to act now, to protect the ocean, protect the people who depend on it, and stop a foreign government from turning U.S. waters into an industrial dumping ground.

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List of plaintiffs:

1. Protect Our Coast New Jersey
2. ACK for Whales
3. Clean Ocean Action
4. American Seafood (Stonington & New London, CT)
5. Belford Seafood Co-op (Belford, NJ)
6. Miss Belmar Inc. (Miss Belmar Whale Watch, Belmar, NJ)
7. Fisherman's Dock Cooperative (Point Pleasant Beach, NJ)
8. Heritage Fisheries (F/V Heritage, Westerly, RI)
9. Long Island Commercial Fishing Association (Montauk, NY)
10. Shawn Machie (F/V Capt. John, New Bedford, MA)
11. Mackenzie Paige LLC (F/V Mackenzie Page, Stonington, CT)

12. NAT. W. Inc. (F/V Tradition, Westerly, RI)
13. David Aripotch, Old Squaw Fisheries, Inc. (F/V Caitlin & Mairead, Montauk, NY)
14. Mayor John Peterson, Jr. (Seaside Park, NJ)
15. Seafreeze Shoreside (North Kingstown, RI)
16. Lund's Fisheries, Inc. (Cape May, NJ)

References:

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