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## Tommy Beaudreau at Interior will help achieve Biden's climate goals

BY EDDIE AHN, JOE MARTENS AND ADAM STERN, OPINION CONTRIBUTORS —  
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Last week, President [Joe Biden announced](#) a strikingly ambitious national climate goal: slash U.S. carbon emissions in half by 2030 from 2005 levels.

Biden's pledge doubles down on the nation's previous Paris Agreement target, sending an unmistakable signal that now is the time to tackle carbon emissions. To meet that goal, we'll need significant clean power generation from untapped offshore wind resources — a responsibility that falls in part to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), which oversees energy production on federal lands and waters. Secretary [Deb Haaland](#) has already made clear her strong desire to see renewables flourish under this administration. As her deputy secretary, Biden's nominee, [Tommy Beaudreau](#), is ideally suited to help carry out this administration's marching orders.

Offshore wind presents a massive clean energy opportunity. [Fifty-three percent](#) of U.S. residents today live near coastal population centers, making offshore wind a particularly attractive renewable resource. Powerful wind turbines installed far out at sea can generate tremendous loads of clean energy from steady maritime winds — power is then transmitted by undersea cables to the electric grid. This technology is already deployed in Europe, [where prices have come down sharply](#) as economies of scale and turbine efficiency have soared. The potential in the U.S. is enormous. Millions of American homes could be powered by offshore wind in a matter of years, employing [tens of thousands](#) of workers to make it happen.

This unique renewable resource also brings significant environmental justice dividends, as described in a [report](#) by Brightline Defense, a San Francisco-based environmental justice group led by Eddie Ahn. In California, environmental justice communities are already beset by socioeconomic and environmental burdens, including high unemployment and poor air quality. A bill supporting offshore wind in California [cleared](#) its first legislative hurdle in the state assembly last week. Through local hiring and clean energy generation, deployment of offshore wind at scale would create health and economic benefits in frontline communities on both the East and West coasts.

Offshore wind can also make a robust contribution to the green economy. Bringing this technology to scale requires an entirely new level of infrastructure, industrial development, labor, training and potential research and development. Factories to build the giant components, ports designed for their assembly, specialized vessels to handle them at sea, blades and turbines optimized for U.S. wind conditions — all of these undertakings are linked to growth of this new industry. Already in New York, with its nation-leading commitment to offshore wind, [investments](#) are being made in five separate ports, from Montauk to Albany, to support construction, operations and maintenance.

Despite offshore wind's inherent advantages, the Trump administration turned its back on this opportunity. Haaland's predecessor stalled industry growth through a disjointed and politicized federal review process characterized by inconsistency and [delay](#). A backlog of federal approvals hampered new projects and promising new lease areas [languished](#). The lesson of the Trump years is evident: politics should not decide permitting and leasing; science and technology alone should hold sway. ..

Few understand that fundamental truth as well Beaudreau. He was the [first person](#) to lead Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) starting in 2011. Under his leadership, BOEM advanced the first offshore wind project in federal waters and leased millions of acres on the Outer Continental Shelf for offshore wind power. Throughout his time at Interior, Beaudreau recruited clean energy and climate experts for key personnel roles, further demonstrating his commitment to the department's responsibility as a frontline of climate action.

The experience Beaudreau gained during his tenure at DOI is invaluable. Paired with Haaland's unique perspective, the Biden Interior Department is set to make unmatched progress addressing climate change and the intersecting environmental, health and economic crises our nation faces. How quickly, and to what scale, we build the new U.S. offshore wind industry will influence how much our citizens, environment and economy benefit — and whether America has what it takes to meet Biden's climate goals. The U.S. Senate should swiftly confirm Beaudreau for deputy secretary so he can help the nation realize offshore wind's promise.

*Eddie Ahn is executive director of [Brightline Defense](#), a San Francisco-based environmental justice nonprofit. Joe Martens is director of the [New York Offshore Wind Alliance](#) and former commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Stephanie McClellan is founder of the [Special Initiative on Offshore Wind](#) at the University of Delaware. Adam Stern is executive director of [Offshore Wind California](#), a Menlo Park, Calif.-based industry trade group.*

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**About the New York Offshore Wind Alliance:** The New York Offshore Wind Alliance (NYOWA) is a diverse coalition of organizations with a shared interest in promoting the responsible development of offshore wind power for New York. NYOWA is a new project of the Alliance for Clean Energy New York (ACE NY). [www.aceny.org/NYOWA](http://www.aceny.org/NYOWA)