Trump’s war on offshore wind faces another lawsuit



Dominion Energy, an offshore wind developer and utility serving Virginia’s “data center alley,” filed suit against the Trump administration this week over its decision to pause federal leases for large offshore wind projects. The move puts a sudden stop to five wind farms already under construction, including Dominion’s Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project.

The complaint Dominion filed Tuesday alleges that a stop work order that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) issued Monday is unlawful, “arbitrary and capricious,” and “infringes upon constitutional principles that limit actions by the Executive Branch.” Dominion wants a federal court to prevent BOEM from enforcing the stop work order.

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The suit also argues that the “sudden and baseless withdrawal of regulatory approvals by government officials” threatens the ability of developers to construct large-scale infrastructure projects needed to meet rising energy demand in the US.

“Virginia needs every electron we can get as our demand for electricity doubles. These electrons will power the data centers that will win the AI race,” Dominion said in a December 22 press release. Virginia is home to the largest concentration of data centers in the world, according to the company.

The rush to build out new data centers for AI — along with growing energy demand from manufacturing and the electrification of homes and vehicles — has put added pressure on already stressed power grids. Rising electricity costs have become a flashpoint in Virginia elections, and in communities near data center projects across the US, as a result. Delaying construction on the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind farm raises project costs that customers ultimately pay for, Dominion warns.

Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, who is named as one of the defendants in the suit, said that the 90-day pause on offshore wind leases would allow the agency to address national security risks, which were apparently recently identified in classified reports. The US Department of Interior also cited concerns about turbines creating radar interference.

“I want to know what’s changed?” national security expert and former Commander of the USS Cole Kirk Lippold told the Associated Press. “To my knowledge, nothing has changed in the threat environment that would drive us to stop any offshore wind programs.”

The Trump administration previously halted construction on the Revolution Wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island and Empire

Wind project off the shore of New York before a federal judge and BOEM lifted stop work orders. Those projects have now been suspended again. President Donald Trump issued a presidential memorandum upon stepping into office in January withdrawing areas on the outer continental shelf from offshore wind leasing, which a federal judge struck down earlier this month for being “arbitrary and capricious.”

Dominion Energy says it had already obtained all the federal, state, and local approvals necessary for the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind farm, which broke ground in 2024. The company has already spent $8.9 billion to date on the $11.2 billion project that was expected to start generating power next year. Fully up and running, the offshore wind farm is supposed to have the capacity to produce 9.5 million megawatt-hours per year of carbon pollution-free electricity, about as much as 660,000 homes might use in the US.

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