

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

The Trump administration recently declared its intention to pay TotalEnergies, a French energy company, nearly \$1 billion in U.S. taxpayer money not to build offshore wind farms off the East Coast of the United States. This legally dubious plan comes at a time when Americans' energy bills are skyrocketing, especially the price of gasoline, which has spiked since President Trump launched an illegal war against Iran. It makes no sense to spend taxpayer dollars on an effort that will both decrease our energy independence and increase American reliance on dirty, volatile, and expensive fossil fuels. We urge the Administration to cancel this bad deal.

The Trump administration announced that it will pay TotalEnergies \$928 million to forfeit its leases in federal waters for two wind facilities that would have been built off the coast of New York and North Carolina.¹ The wind farms could have produced enough electricity to power more than one million homes and businesses in New York and New Jersey, and approximately 300,000 in North Carolina, respectively.² TotalEnergies has stated that it will be making commensurate investments in oil and gas projects, including a liquefied natural gas export facility in Texas—although it does not note whether these investments are new or were already planned expenditures for the company.³

Offshore wind projects increase domestic energy supply, reduce ratepayer costs, and employ tens of thousands of Americans.⁴ Earlier this month, our country hit two major offshore wind milestones: Vineyard Wind 1 completed construction off the coast of Massachusetts, and Revolution Wind started sending power to the grid for Connecticut and Rhode Island. Combined, the two projects are projected to deliver more than 1,500 clean megawatts of electricity, enough to power 750,000 homes across the region.⁵

¹ Maxine Joselow and Brad Plumer. *Trump Administration to Pay \$1 Billion to Energy Giant to Cancel Wind Farms*. N.Y. Times (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/23/climate/offshore-wind-gas-trump-total.html>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Offshore wind power facts*, American Clean Power (2026), <https://cleanpower.org/facts/offshore-wind/>.

⁵ Diana DiGangi. *Revolution Wind comes online, Vineyard Wind 1 completes construction*. Utility Dive (Mar. 16, 2026), <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/revolution-wind-comes-online-vineyard-wind-completes-construction/814794/>; Iberdrola, *Vineyard Wind I, our first offshore wind farm in the United States*, <https://www.iberdrola.com/about-us/what-we-do/offshore-wind-energy/vineyard-wind-offshore-wind-farm> (last visited Mar. 30, 2026).

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Yet, with the TotalEnergies payoff, the Trump administration promises an extraordinary transfer of taxpayer dollars to a foreign company to halt private offshore wind development and prop up fossil fuel company exports and profits. It has done so with no explanation of its authority—or the source of the funding—to transmit \$1 billion to a private company. This action comes at a time when energy costs are up dramatically: Americans' electricity bills have risen as much as 13 percent since the start of this Administration and the price of a gallon of gasoline has climbed by more than 30 percent—about \$1 per gallon—since President Trump attacked Iran.⁶ Moreover, TotalEnergies has made clear it will plow these taxpayer-funded proceeds into expanded oil and gas development, including a Texas liquefied natural gas export facility, effectively using U.S. public funds to ship American energy overseas, strain domestic supply, weaken grid reliability, and expose American families to higher and more volatile prices.

The plan to pay off TotalEnergies not to develop offshore wind also comes on the heels of the Administration's court losses in cases challenging its attempts to halt five nearly completed offshore wind projects.⁷ In issuing preliminary injunctions against the Administration, courts have found insufficient evidence to support its claim that these offshore wind projects constituted a “national security threat.”⁸ Despite losing in court, the Interior Department repeated the baseless allegations of “national security concerns” in its press release touting the arrangement with TotalEnergies.⁹

To help us and the public better understand how and why you propose to use \$1 billion in taxpayer funds to pay off a foreign company to halt domestic clean energy projects, please respond to the following questions in writing by April 10, 2026:

1. What specific statutory authority permits the Department of the Interior to use taxpayer funds to compensate TotalEnergies for relinquishing valid offshore wind leases?
2. What is the source of the funds for this payment, and did Congress appropriate them for this purpose?
3. Provide all legal opinions or memoranda supporting the conclusion that this payment complies with federal fiscal law, including the Anti-Deficiency Act.

⁶ Julia Jacobo et al., *Energy bills in US have increased 13% since Trump took office, new report finds*, ABC News (Dec. 15, 2025), <https://abcnews.com/US/energy-bills-us-increased-13-trump-office-new/story?id=128346091>; Chris Hippensteel and Steven Rich, *Gas Prices Have Jumped More Than 30% in Some States in Two Weeks*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 22, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/22/us/gas-prices-south-southwest.html>.

⁷ Maxine Joselow, *Judge Hands Trump a Fifth Loss in His Effort to Halt Offshore Wind Projects*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 2, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/02/climate/judge-offshore-wind-sunrise.html>.

⁸ E.g., Jennifer McDermott and Alexa St. John, *Yet another judge rejects Trump effort to block offshore wind, saying NY project can resume*, AP (Feb. 2, 2026), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-offshore-wind-lawsuits-new-york-orsted-f3b2e9b4bca0d01e45c5b7ab372ae0c4>.

⁹ Press Release, U.S. Department of the Interior, Interior and TotalEnergies Agree to End Offshore Wind Projects, Lowering Costs for American Families (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-and-totalenergies-agree-end-offshore-wind-projects-lowering-costs-american>.

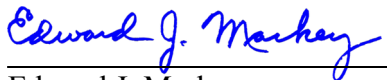
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4. Provide the full terms of any agreement with TotalEnergies, including any conditions, performance requirements, or clawback provisions tied to the payment.
5. What specific evidence supports the Administration's assertion that these offshore wind projects pose a national security concern?
6. How does the Department reconcile those national security claims with recent federal court decisions finding insufficient evidence to support them?
7. What analysis has the Department conducted on how canceling these offshore wind projects will affect domestic energy supply, grid reliability, and consumer electricity and fuel costs?
8. Identify all senior Administration officials and outside entities involved in or consulted on this decision, and provide related communications with TotalEnergies.
9. What analysis has the Department conducted on how canceling these offshore wind projects will affect offshore wind workers, including workers in the offshore wind supply chain? If you have not conducted this analysis, explain why not.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress