

Leadership 100 Summit Executive Summary

Last Thursday, the Business Network for Offshore Wind hosted the second Leadership 100 summit bringing together leaders of the offshore wind industry to discuss pressing issues, brainstorm solutions, and develop actionable plans to execute over the next year. Held just days before the inauguration of President Joseph R. Biden, the summit offered these leaders an opportunity to put the industry in a prime position to embrace the growth opportunities expected under the administration. The summit brought together all levels of the offshore wind supply chain including global and domestic leading companies, public officials, and national advocacy experts.

The last L100 summit convened in 2019 and created benchmarks for future industry success. Since then, the Network has supported industry growth and development by expanding the [Supply Chain Connect](#) registry and developing an industry supply chain road map, increasing data collection, and launching a more robust public engagement campaign. It has also convened key discussions on grid and transmission planning, both regionally and at the federal level, leading to the publication of the Network's [2020 Offshore Wind Transmission White Paper](#).

This year, the summit structured conversation around three topics:

- Procurement and Progress: Enhancing certainty, streamlining, and approvals at the federal level
- Exploring 2-year and 4-year goals
- Supply Chain and Workforce Development

Leadership 100 attendees expressed confidence that the Biden Administration's renewable energy focus and recent favorable legislative action would create significant growth and investment within the offshore wind industry. Attendees did note that, to fulfill offshore wind's economic potential, issues like regulatory uncertainty and a lack of regional and industry-wide coordination would need to be addressed. Each of these topics were discussed in a collaborative setting to find common solutions.

Regulatory Certainty, Streamlining, and Approvals: Easily the most pressing concern identified by summit attendees is the regulatory uncertainty that developers, suppliers, and even public officials face in the federal offshore wind permitting process. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), responsible for offshore renewable energy development in federal waters, has not approved any of the 10 currently pending Construction and Operations Plans (COPs) for any commercial scale offshore wind projects, and has only leased enough wind energy areas for approximately 20 GWs of offshore wind capacity; the agency last leased new areas in December 2018. Currently there is a market demand of over 30 GWs fueled by state commitments to purchase electricity from offshore wind – and some states are considering raising their targets even higher in the near future.

Attendees discussed the need for the U.S. federal government to focus on advancing current projects in the queue, increasing transparency and predictability in the permitting process, and creating consistency and frequency in leasing expansion. With the Biden Administration entering office, summit attendees spoke about how immediate leasing in the New York Bight would be a signal to the industry and for domestic supply chain development. Finally, the group noted that BOEM recently was allocated more funding to help solve these bottleneck issues and discussed how they, as industry leaders, could help expedite applications through their own submission improvements including submitting thorough plans.

Regional and Industry-Wide Cooperation to Develop the Supply Chain: By bringing together industry leaders of all levels, the Leadership 100 Summit is always a perfect forum for the whole industry to search for ways to coordinate their efforts better. Naturally, the desire to seek further cooperation in several different areas were a leading topic of conversation. Attendees agreed that to foster growth within the industry, macro and micro-targeted issues required coordinated solutions.

Leadership 100 attendees discussed the need to better convey the benefits of offshore wind to the public along the East Coast and elsewhere. In recent years, states have taken bold steps forward in their commitments to procure offshore wind energy but, due to the long development timeline each project faces, benefits are not obvious or immediate. With offshore wind poised for significant growth under the Biden administration, the industry has an excellent opportunity to build public and political support through local community engagements that profile economic development and deliver justice for low-income and minority communities. The summit spoke about how the onshore wind industry was able to build broad support as a goal.

Attendees also discussed the need for more cooperation to develop regional supply chains and for further standardization across the industry to support the exponential growth that offshore wind offers. There is always natural tension between local content requirements and competitive pricing bids and the summit attendees created an action item to explore ideas fostering more regional coordination to support local supply chain development.

As a final topic, the summit discussed the difficulty in bringing 30 GWs of offshore wind-generated electricity onshore with the current transmission grid in place. Since the U.S. transmission industry is fragmented on a regional basis, the need for federal-state-local cooperation in solving national problems is paramount. Attendees spoke of the need for more involvement of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and viewed the agency's full staffing as a positive development for agency action. This same subject was discussed at the previous Leadership 100 summit and resulted in the Network's [2020 Offshore Wind Transmission White Paper](#) which attendees praised for bringing more attention to the pressing issue.

In the coming months, the Network will focus its efforts on identified strategic initiatives to move collective industry and supply chain goals forward.