Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind?**
   Established in 2014, the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind is an independent, objective, and non-commercial offshore wind program whose purpose is to catapult current efforts to advance offshore wind in the U.S. by providing timely and cutting-edge information and expertise, catalyzing new partnerships, and furthering roadmaps to “steel in the water.”

2. **Why is the Special Initiative needed at this time?**
   This is an opportune moment for offshore wind in America. Offshore wind is the most powerful potential carbon-reducing energy source for East Coast states. Wide deployment of offshore wind in the U.S. can – as it has done in northern Europe and the UK – revitalize coastal industry and ports, reduce pollution and creates tens of thousands of jobs. Offshore wind power is ready for launch but has stalled for lack of strategic initiative, cooperative effort, and information sharing.

   An opportunity exists right now to advance policymakers’ understanding of the value of offshore wind energy and to present why offshore wind is an appealing energy choice. Europe’s and the UK’s experience with offshore wind provides important lessons that we can learn from to reduce the cost of offshore wind energy by up to 30% its current cost; there are ripe opportunities for regional collaboration that, if seized, can provide a roadmap to further collaborations; there are new opportunities for international partnerships to reduce the cost of offshore wind; and perhaps most importantly, there is growing evidence of offshore wind’s value proposition. The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind is an entity fully-dedicated to seizing this moment. The Special Initiative works at the intersections of industry, national and international experts, and state and federal policy-makers, while also adding value to existing coalitions and efforts.

3. **Who is involved?**
   The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind is housed at the University of Delaware’s College of Earth, Ocean and Environment, with funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, New York Community Trust, John Merck Fund and Mertz Gilmore Foundation. Seeing the signals that the time is ripe for a fully dedicated policy, research and catalytic initiative, the support provided by these philanthropic organizations have been a significant booster of offshore wind efforts.

   Establishing the Special Initiative at the University of Delaware allows the Initiative to draw on UD’s long history of advancing offshore wind through policy analysis, research, public testimony, and industrial partnerships. For example, the University of Delaware and Gamesa Technology Corporation joined forces to install a utility-scale 2-megawatt (2-MW) coastal wind turbine at UD’s Hugh R. Sharp Campus in Lewes, DE, allowing the company to test the turbine in a coastal environment, and allowing the university to expand student training and research on an industrial-scale turbine. (See [http://www.ceoe.udel.edu/windpower](http://www.ceoe.udel.edu/windpower)).
Leading the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind is Stephanie McClellan, Ph.D., who has offshore wind power experience in both the private and public sectors. She previously served as Director of Strategic Initiatives and Outreach for the Google-backed Atlantic Wind Connection. Working for this offshore wind infrastructure project put Dr. McClellan in close contact with the majority of offshore wind developers, policy-makers in multiple offshore wind states, and the vast network of state and national offshore wind advocates. Dr. McClellan took a lead role in the offshore wind industry after her immersion in the field as Policy Director for Delaware Governor Jack A. Markell. In that position she witnessed first-hand the struggles and disappointments of a state that is willing but not able to capitalize on its abundant wind energy resources.

4. **Who does the Special Initiative work with? And what is its geographic scope?**
The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind works with national and international experts in offshore wind, industry participants, NGO’s and state and federal policy-makers. How does the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind work with other existing offshore wind efforts at the University of Delaware? The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind is separate from, yet complements, existing and long-standing UD efforts on offshore wind power housed in the CCPI. The Special Initiative is focused on building coalitions and develops and implements its agenda in close collaboration with industry, NGO’s and policymakers to advance offshore wind markets. The Special Initiative may use research and innovations from CCPI experts as appropriate. The CCPI, also as appropriate, will draw upon lessons learned and insights from the Special Initiative over time.

5. **What activities does the Special Initiative undertake?**
The Special Initiative performs a vital role by:

- Connecting states and national/international experts;
- Bridging lessons learned from Europe and the UK;
- Analyzing the current value proposition and provide critical information to decision-makers (topics include price suppression effects of offshore wind and the impact of offshore wind on natural gas usage during extreme cold spells like winter, 2014)
- Identifying and sharing best practices for regional collaboration; and by
- Serving as a resource to all offshore wind states by providing technological, financial and strategic advice to meet local challenges, and develop/advance customized policy models.

6. **What is the project’s anticipated impact? How will it benefit offshore wind?**
For offshore wind to be deployed in the US utilities must buy electricity from offshore wind projects, with state support for offshore wind contracts. There are many paths to that result (policy, bilateral contracts, etc.), but that is what will be needed. While the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind does not facilitate contracts or state approval of them, the Initiative’s anticipated impact is that through its work state decision-makers will have a crystal clear understanding of the benefits of offshore wind and its “value for the money” and will have customized solutions/answers for how to best take advantage of this resource, in ways that are most cost-effective and beneficial to the state.

7. **I have additional questions about the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind. Whom should I contact?**
Dr. Stephanie McClellan can be reached at + 1 302 943 8264 or stephmcc@udel.edu.