

US politics & policy

Ørsted hit by US stop-work order on Rhode Island wind farm

Trump administration says it wants to review national security implications of \$1.5bn project that is 80% complete



The Rhode Island wind farm was due to begin operating next year and supply power to 350,000 homes in Rhode Island and Connecticut © Getty Images

Malcolm Moore in London and **Richard Milne** in Oslo

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The US has halted construction on a \$1.5bn offshore wind farm off Rhode Island, dealing a new blow to Danish energy group Ørsted as it tries to repair its balance sheet.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management issued a stop-work order on Friday, citing the need “to address concerns related to the protection of national security interests”. The agency did not provide further details.

Revolution Wind, which Ørsted is developing with Skyborn Renewables, a unit of BlackRock’s Global Infrastructure Partners, is 80 per cent complete. The project has finished installing foundations and 45 of the 65 planned turbines.

It was due to begin operations next year and supply enough power for 350,000 homes in Rhode Island and Connecticut under 20-year contracts.

It is the second time the Trump administration has intervened in a big US offshore

wind project. In April, the White House paused, and then later approved Equinor's \$5bn [Empire Wind project](#), which was at an earlier stage of development than Ørsted's.

On Saturday, Ørsted said it has obtained the necessary permits and was "evaluating its options", including legal action. The company said it would update the market on the financial implications of the order "in due course".

The potential delay, or loss, of revenues from the project piles greater pressure on the world's largest offshore wind developer, which launched a \$9.4bn emergency rights issue this month after struggling to attract partners for its Sunrise Wind project off New York. The share sale triggered a sharp sell-off in Ørsted stock.

Revolution Wind, the halted project, is part of 8.1GW of wind projects globally that Ørsted said it was relying on to put its finances back on track. It is one of five offshore wind projects in the US that are under construction.

"This is the kind of stuff that happens in third-world countries and instead it's happening in what is supposed to be the bastion of the free market. It's just not serious," said a spokesperson for the Global Wind Energy Council, an industry group.

"It has an extremely chilling effect in the sense that the US is not a safe place for investment."

The stop-work order represents the latest setback to Washington's Nato ally Denmark. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he wants to take control of the giant Arctic island of Greenland from Denmark, and has not ruled out using force.

He has also trained his sights on Novo Nordisk, the pharmaceutical group that has reduced prices on its weight-loss drugs in the US sharply in recent weeks.

[Denmark](#), which is buying F-35 fighter jets from the US, has offered to increase its focus on Arctic security.

But on Friday, Danish foreign minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen was in California

where he signed a new partnership with the state's governor Gavin Newsom, who is the [self-appointed head of the “resistance”](#) to Trump.

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