

# Why the Pentagon Just Froze 165 American Wind Farms

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*Note: the original article is provided as a separate file (attached to the email or downloadable from the website).*

## 1. Reading Passage

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In late 2025 and early 2026, the Trump administration quietly executed one of the most aggressive interventions in US energy markets in decades – without passing a single new law. Instead, the Department of Defense simply stopped approving wind farms.

Approvals for roughly 165 onshore wind projects on private American land are now stalled, according to the American Clean Power Association (ACP). The freeze affects projects at every stage: 35 had completed negotiations and were waiting only for a final DoD signature; another 30 had received verbal sign-offs and expected written confirmation any day; about 50 were mid-negotiation; and 50 more were so routine they would normally have sailed through unnoticed. Together, the stalled projects could generate 30 gigawatts of electricity – enough to power 15 million homes.

Why does the Pentagon get a vote on wind farms in the first place? Because spinning turbine blades can show up on military radar as phantom aircraft, the DoD reviews each site to make sure it won't interfere with flight paths or defence systems. Normally this is a fast, technical process: developers pay the Army a fee to update its radar filtering software, and approval can come in days. But since August 2025, developers say the agency has stopped returning their calls, cancelled scheduled meetings without rescheduling, and informed them their applications are simply no longer being processed. Letters sent in early April told developers the Pentagon was reviewing its entire process for evaluating energy projects' impact on national security.

The move fits a clear pattern. President Donald Trump has long called wind the 'worst form of energy' and stated his goal is to not let any windmill be built. His administration has also been refunding offshore wind leases in areas managed by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, citing both national security and unspecified environmental concerns – and trading some of that ocean acreage for fossil-fuel investments, including a \$1 billion deal with TotalEnergies in March. Here's the catch

## 2. Explanation

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*Imagine spending years and millions of dollars to build a wind farm – only to have the Department of Defense quietly stop returning your calls. That's exactly what's happening to 165 US projects right now.*

### What's Going On?

The Trump administration has frozen approvals for roughly 165 onshore wind projects on private US land, with the Department of Defense citing national security concerns. Wind farms normally need a routine DoD sign-off to make sure their giant spinning blades don't interfere with military radar.

Since August 2025, developers say the Pentagon has stopped returning calls, cancelled meetings without rescheduling, and quietly halted application processing. Some of the stalled projects had already received verbal sign-offs and were just waiting for the paperwork.

### How To Think About It

This isn't a formal ban – it's a slow-motion shutdown by paperwork. The mechanism is bureaucratic ghosting:

- Like a restaurant that doesn't say it's closed but stops seating customers – the kitchen is technically open, but nothing comes out. The DoD hasn't outlawed wind; it's just stopped processing the permits.
- Or think of a teacher who refuses to grade your paper. You did the work, the rules say it should take days, but without that signature you can't graduate. Developers are stuck in the same limbo.

### Key Things To Know

- The 165 stalled projects could generate 30 gigawatts – enough to power 15 million homes.
- Radar reviews normally take just days; developers usually pay the Army an agreed fee to update its radar filters so turbines don't appear as phantom aircraft.
- Of the affected projects, 35 had already finished negotiations and were awaiting final DoD sign-off; another 30 had verbal approval and were waiting on written confirmation.
- President Trump has called wind the 'worst form of energy' and said his goal is to not let any windmill be built.
- The administration is simultaneously refunding offshore wind leases in exchange for fossil-fuel investments – including a \$1bn deal with TotalEnergies in March.

### Why It Matters

Electricity demand is exploding – AI data centres, EVs, and air conditioning all need power, and wind is one of the cheapest new sources. If you're heading into engineering, environmental science, law, or even rural real estate, this is the kind of policy shift that reshapes career paths and where investment flows. It also tests a conservative principle: should the federal government be able to tell private landowners they can't lease their fields to a wind developer?

## **The Bigger Picture**

The clampdown is the most aggressive use of national-security review against domestic energy in recent memory. Watch for lawsuits from developers and red-state landowners (a lot of wind blows through Texas, Iowa, and Oklahoma), challenges from states that depend on wind tax revenue, and a likely surge in electricity prices in regions that were counting on these megawatts. If courts force the DoD to explain its 'security' reasoning, the whole strategy could unravel – or harden into precedent.

### 3. Key Terms Glossary

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#### **Onshore wind**

Wind farms built on land (as opposed to offshore wind, which is built in the ocean). Onshore is generally cheaper and faster to build.

#### **Gigawatt (GW)**

A unit of power equal to one billion watts. A single large nuclear reactor produces about 1 GW; 30 GW is enough for roughly 15 million American homes.

#### **Radar interference**

When spinning turbine blades show up on military or aviation radar as false signals, potentially confusing air-traffic or defence systems. It's a real but solvable engineering problem.

#### **American Clean Power Association (ACP)**

The main US trade group lobbying on behalf of wind, solar, and battery-storage companies.

#### **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)**

The federal agency that leases out US offshore waters for energy projects, including offshore wind and oil drilling.

#### **Verbal sign-off**

An informal go-ahead from an official before formal paperwork is issued. It signals the deal is essentially done – but isn't legally binding.

## 4. Reading Comprehension Quiz

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Circle the best answer for each question.

**Q1.** The passage most directly argues that the Trump administration is:

- A) Banning wind energy through new federal legislation
- B) Using bureaucratic delay to halt wind development
- C) Negotiating compromise terms with wind developers
- D) Strengthening radar systems near wind projects

**Q2.** Which choice best states the central idea of the passage?

- A) Radar interference from turbines poses a major military threat
- B) Wind energy is the cheapest source of new electricity
- C) A Pentagon slowdown is choking the US onshore wind industry
- D) Offshore wind is replacing onshore wind in federal policy

**Q3.** According to the passage, wind farms typically need DoD approval because:

- A) Turbine blades can interfere with military radar systems
- B) Federal land leases require Pentagon authorisation
- C) Defence contractors operate most US wind projects
- D) Wind power is classified as critical defence infrastructure

**Q4.** As used in the passage, the word 'stalled' most nearly means:

- A) Cancelled permanently with no possibility of revival
- B) Delayed indefinitely without formal rejection
- C) Negotiated down to a smaller scale of operation
- D) Transferred to a different government department

**Q5.** As used in the passage, the word 'crusade' most nearly means:

- A) A religious military expedition led by Christians
- B) A sustained, passionate campaign against something
- C) A formal investigation conducted by Congress
- D) A short-term marketing push by an industry

**Q6.** Which statement about the DoD's behaviour can most reasonably be inferred from the passage?

- A) The agency is following a clear, publicly announced policy
- B) The agency is acting on legitimate radar threats discovered in 2025
- C) The agency's silence is itself the policy tool being used
- D) The agency plans to approve all 165 projects within weeks

**Q7.** The passage suggests that Jason Grumet's quote is intended to:

- A) Praise Trump for protecting national security interests
- B) Highlight a contradiction with conservative property-rights values
- C) Demand new federal subsidies for the wind industry
- D) Argue that offshore wind is safer than onshore wind

**Q8.** The author's tone in describing the administration's actions is best characterised as:

- A)** Openly outraged and emotionally charged
- B)** Neutrally factual but quietly skeptical
- C)** Enthusiastically supportive of the policy shift
- D)** Confused and unable to identify a clear pattern

**Q9.** Which of the following can most reasonably be inferred about Trump's energy priorities?

- A)** He treats wind and fossil fuels as roughly equal options
- B)** He is actively swapping wind capacity for fossil-fuel investment
- C)** He has pushed Congress to repeal all renewable-energy tax credits
- D)** He privately supports wind but is constrained by his party

**Q10.** Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A)** 'Wind farms require routine approval from the defence department.'
- B)** 'The wind farms could generate 30 gigawatts, enough to power 15mn homes.'
- C)** 'Refunding offshore wind leases in exchange for investments in fossil fuels.'
- D)** 'Letters sent to developers in early April said the agency was reviewing its processes.'

**My Score:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

## 5. Answer Key with Explanations

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**Q1.** The passage most directly argues that the Trump administration is:

**Answer: B**

The passage describes cancelled meetings, halted application processing, and stalled approvals – administrative slowdown, not legislation. A is wrong (TRAP C: sounds plausible in real life but the passage describes no new law). SAT Tip: When the question asks what a passage 'most directly argues,' look for the action verbs the author uses repeatedly – here, 'stalled,' 'halted,' 'stopped processing' all point to delay rather than formal prohibition.

**Q2.** Which choice best states the central idea of the passage?

**Answer: C**

The passage centres on the DoD freezing approvals for 165 projects, escalating Trump's broader campaign against wind. A is wrong (TRAP B: uses passage vocabulary like 'radar' but inverts the framing – the article treats radar concerns sceptically, as a pretext). SAT Tip: The central idea has to cover the whole passage, not just one paragraph. If an option only matches a single sentence, it's probably a detail, not the main idea.

**Q3.** According to the passage, wind farms typically need DoD approval because:

**Answer: A**

The passage explains that DoD review ensures turbines don't interfere with radar, with developers paying to update radar filter systems. B is wrong (TRAP C: federal-land approvals exist in real life, but these projects are on private land – the passage emphasises that). SAT Tip: For 'according to the passage' questions, the answer must be explicitly stated, not just plausible. Locate the exact sentence before choosing.

**Q4.** As used in the passage, the word 'stalled' most nearly means:

**Answer: B**

The projects are awaiting sign-off and stuck in limbo, not formally killed – that matches 'delayed indefinitely.' A is wrong (TRAP A: right scope but wrong direction – stalled implies suspension, not termination). SAT Tip: On vocab-in-context, substitute each option for the word and see which keeps the sentence's meaning intact.

**Q5.** As used in the passage, the word 'crusade' most nearly means:

**Answer: B**

The passage uses 'crusade' to describe Trump's ongoing fight against renewable energy – a sustained campaign. A is wrong (TRAP B: it's the literal historical meaning, but the passage uses the word figuratively). SAT Tip: Common words on the SAT almost always carry their secondary, figurative meaning – if the literal definition feels obvious, look for the metaphorical one.

**Q6.** Which statement about the DoD's behaviour can most reasonably be inferred from the passage?

**Answer: C**

The passage describes cancelled meetings and unanswered communications – the absence of process IS how the freeze works. B is wrong (TRAP C: real-world plausible but the passage frames national-security claims with skepticism via the ACP quote). SAT Tip: For inference questions, ask 'what does the author imply through tone and word choice,' not 'what could possibly be true in the real world.'

**Q7.** The passage suggests that Jason Grumet's quote is intended to:

**Answer: B**

*Grumet points out that telling private landowners what they can't do with their property clashes with conservative values about economic freedom. C is wrong (TRAP C: the wind industry does want subsidies in real life, but Grumet's quoted argument is about property rights, not money). SAT Tip: When a passage quotes someone, ask what rhetorical job that quote does for the author's argument – quotes are chosen, not random.*

**Q8.** The author's tone in describing the administration's actions is best characterised as:

**Answer: B**

*The author reports facts without editorialising but lets sources like Grumet voice criticism, and notes Trump's hostile language ('worst form of energy') without endorsing it. A is wrong (TRAP A: same direction but wrong intensity – the tone isn't openly angry). SAT Tip: Tone questions are about HOW the author writes, not WHAT they cover. Look at adjectives, quoted sources, and what's left unsaid.*

**Q9.** Which of the following can most reasonably be inferred about Trump's energy priorities?

**Answer: B**

*The passage notes the administration is refunding offshore wind leases in exchange for fossil-fuel investments, including a \$1bn TotalEnergies deal. C is wrong (TRAP C: plausible in reality but the passage doesn't mention Congress or tax credits). SAT Tip: 'Most reasonably inferred' means supported by passage evidence – eliminate options that require facts the passage never provides.*

**Q10.** Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

**Answer: C**

*Option C directly states the swap of wind leases for fossil-fuel investment, which is exactly what Q9 asked about. B is wrong (TRAP B: it's a real passage quote but about scale of capacity, not about Trump's priorities). SAT Tip: On evidence-pairing questions, pick your Q9 answer first, then find the line that PROVES it – don't pick a quote that's merely 'on topic.'*