



July 26, 2009
Massachusetts, Rhode Island

R.I. 'way ahead' of Mass. in selecting areas for wind turbines

A friendly rivalry between Massachusetts and Rhode Island over development of wind energy heated up this summer as Massachusetts released what it described as the "nation's first draft comprehensive ocean management plan" that identifies sites for potential wind energy development.

Rhode Island officials responded that the Massachusetts plan is limited to inshore waters, similar to those that Rhode Island mapped 20 years ago.

Meanwhile, Rhode Island is halfway through a comprehensive study of its coastal waters as far as 20 miles offshore, according to Grover Fugate, executive director of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council.

"Massachusetts is identifying what areas might be available [for wind turbines] but they have not done the screening analysis," says Fugate. "We're still way head on that issue."

Massachusetts Governor Patrick signed the Oceans Management Act of 2008 which required his energy and environmental affairs secretary to develop a comprehensive ocean management plan by June 30, 2009. The draft plan covered areas ranging from 0.3 nautical miles seaward of mean high water up to three miles offshore, and excluded most developed harbor and ports area. It identifies two areas adjacent to federal waters suitable for commercial-scale wind energy development.

The plan does not cover the very areas in Nantucket Sound where the controversial Cape Wind energy project has been fought over for many years. Massachusetts is scheduling public hearings and a public comment period on the draft plan that will extend into November. It is available at www.mass.gov/eea/mop ^[1].

Rhode Island's ocean mapping project is about halfway completed. The state is spending nearly \$4 million on a team of scientists from the University of Rhode Island who are studying the best locations for a \$1.5-billion wind farm proposed by [Governor Carcieri](#) ^[2].

Early indications are that the best locations economically and environmentally will be 15 to 20 miles offshore, largely out of site of possible critics on the mainland.

Other efforts are continuing in both states with wind power.

Last week, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management announced it is surveying residents in Narragansett about its proposal to locate three to six turbines on state land at Camp Cronin, Black Point and property southwest of the Galilee Escape Road.

DEM says it sent out surveys to about 800 residents. The DEM also has created a new section of its Web site, www.dem.ri.gov ^[3], entitled "Renewable Energy" that provides more information on the plans for Narragansett, as well as graphics suggesting what the turbines would look like at the three locations.

DEM also announced it has contracted with Roger Williams University to set up a meteorological tower late this summer at Camp Cronin to gather information on wind conditions.

The DEM plans to use energy from the turbines to power its facilities in the Port of Galilee and nearby beaches. Turbines also are being considered at two local wastewater treatment plants.

Also last week, Massachusetts announced it was awarding three design and construction contracts and six feasibility study contracts for wind energy projects around the state. The projects are valued at \$2.2 million. They include educational institutions, a farm and a shopping center.

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projo.com ^[4]

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URLs in this post:

[1] www.mass.gov/eea/mop: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/mop>

[2] Governor Carcieri: <http://www.projo.com/blcS.sc?search=Governor+Carcieri&cat=all>

[3] www.dem.ri.gov: <http://www.dem.ri.gov>

[4] [projo.com](http://www.projo.com/outdoors/environmentaljournal/Environmental_Journal_26_07-26-09_L9F4I67_v6.31d1ff8.html): http://www.projo.com/outdoors/environmentaljournal/Environmental_Journal_26_07-26-09_L9F4I67_v6.31d1ff8.html

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