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Via e-mail: energymasterplan@bpu.state.nj.us

Draft Energy Master Plan Comments
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
Office of Policy and Planning
Two Gateway Center
Newark, New Jersey 07102

There are significant benefits to New Jersey from offshore wind. Offshore, the wind blows harder and larger turbines can be installed. The New Jersey situation is similar to that of densely populated Europe, where there is limited space on land and relatively large offshore areas with shallow water. Since there is a high demand for electricity in the Atlantic City area offshore wind can provide power without the need for major new transmission lines to import electricity from out of state or the construction of new fossil fuel-fired facilities. Fishermen's Energy is keenly interested in managing the impacts of offshore energy developments so they are compatible with existing uses of the sea.

It has been proposed that the Energy Master Plan be updated to include a goal of installing 3000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2020. The prior draft had a base case target of 300 MW and an alternate of 1000 MW. A target of 3000 MW of offshore wind by 2020 is an admirable goal, one worth achieving.

This goal will require the construction of between 600 (if all were 5MW) to 1000 turbines offshore of New Jersey by the year 2020. But, there are no offshore wind farms anywhere in North America, much less in New Jersey. The first and only onshore wind farm in New Jersey is a 7.5 megawatt plant in Atlantic City built two and a half years ago. Currently there are no offshore wind farms permitted or built anywhere in the US today.

To facilitate the construction of the first offshore wind farm off of New Jersey's coast the NJDEP is in the midst of a 30 month environmental baseline study, the results of which should be available near the end of 2009 or early 2010. The Commerce Department commissioned a year long study on the economic impact of offshore wind, a report that may be released soon. And the NJ BPU is in the review process of a grant proposal that will select a company to permit and build a test project offshore 'pilot wind farm', pursuant to the recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel from April 2006.

The BPU Solicitation requires the winning proposal to conduct at least two to three years of post commissioning environmental monitoring impact studies as part of the award criteria. These post construction operational impact studies will be used by the permitting agencies in determining the impacts, mitigations, and design criteria for subsequent wind farms.

Assuming the award is made as now scheduled in August, offshore wind in New Jersey will begin a permitting, financing, and construction phase that three of the responders (Fishermen's Energy, Bluewater Wind, and Wynergy) to the NJ BPU Solicitation have projected will take until about 2014 for the full generation of 350 MW from their proposed projects in federal offshore waters (beyond 3 miles). If one adds the additional two to three years of environmental post construction operation impact analysis that is required to provide data feedback for the subsequent wind farms, the second (and third and fourth) offshore installations wouldn't begin the multi-year process until sometime in or after 2016. It is thus unlikely on that path that the goal of another 2,700 megawatts of offshore wind (i.e. 7 to 8 more wind farms of the 350 MW size costing over 10 billion dollars) could be completed in four years between 2016 and 2020.

To accelerate development in accordance with the new 3,000 MW EMP goal, the State must implement a planned phased approach for its implementation. To actually construct 600 to 1000 turbines will take the investment by private industry shoreside in new marine construction facilities for the construction, assembly and support of a multi-billion dollar construction program for a new industry. The groundwork for such a positive business and regulatory climate can be laid now if a true pilot project can be swiftly approved in New Jersey. This is the kind of approach that Fishermen's proposed in response to the BPU Grant Solicitation.

Fishermen's Energy Phase 1 wind farm off Atlantic City would likely be the first offshore wind farm in America - an eight turbine, 20 megawatt true pilot, with construction beginning in 2010, fully operational in State waters in early 2011, allowing for the three-year environmental impact analysis to be completed by 2013 and accelerating the development timeline for future offshore installations by as much as three years.

Fishermen's Energy's second phase of 330 megawatts (and potentially wind farms by others) could then be built as modified with the environmental study feed back from our first test pilot phase.

Without real data from local offshore windfarms, like the 20 MW pilot project proposed by Fishermen's Energy, the State could launch into the development of offshore wind in a headstrong, but risky manner, perhaps to the detriment of the environment and local coastal economies.

As local New Jersey business people, long dependant on the health of our coastal waters for our commercial fishing businesses, the principals of Fishermen's Energy are not only local, but are practical builders in the marine environment. We bring to our comments to the NJ EMP and our proposal in response to the NJ BPU Solicitation a long term vision

of future development, in which we anticipate being major participants – a multi-year vision that is based upon our long term history of participation in the economy of our coast and the management of our marine resources upon which we are dependant.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed New Jersey Energy Master Plan and the practicalities of its implementation. Please let us know if we can provide further information that could contribute to the finalization and success of the NJ Energy Master Plan.

Sincerely,

Daniel Cohen
President