

Commercial Fishermen Seek to Build Wind Farm

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By Susan Avedissian



Daniel Cohen, left, makes presentation to freeholders April 22. Photo by SUSAN KRYSIK AVEDISSIAN

By SUSAN KRYSIK AVEDISSIAN and
JOE HART

CREST HAVEN — Local fishermen have gotten into the offshore wind energy game.

Dan Cohen, owner of Atlantic Capes Fisheries in Lower Township, asked freeholders April 22 for their support of a venture among commercial fishing companies that aims to bring wind turbines off the coast of Atlantic City.

He made a similar pitch to county Board of Agriculture members several weeks ago.

Fishermen's Energy of New Jersey, LLC (FERN) is a consortium of principals of New Jersey's fishing industry, formed from discussions, which began about a year ago, according to Cohen.

The proposal came with a Power Point presentation and a request for freeholders to provide their overall support for the project, to have the county join a FERN Rural Electric Cooperative, and to possibly lobby together with Fishermen's Energy to help ease some state policies to make it more economically viable to produce alternative forms of energy.

Fishermen's Energy is one of five applicants for a state Board of Public Utilities grant of \$19 million to launch a 350-megawatt (MW) pilot program of offshore wind farms, limiting proposals to sites along the Jersey coastline between Stone Harbor and Seaside Park.

Other applicants include: Blue Water Wind, of Hoboken; Garden State Offshore Energy, a partnership between PSEG Renewable Generation, LLC and Winergy Power Holdings, LLC; Occidental Development & Equities; and Environmental Technologies, of New York.

The entire project will cost more than \$1 billion, Cohen told freeholders, but will be accomplished in phases.

Cohen laid out an overall view of his consortium's proposal.

Phase 0 or the onshore phase, would construct one 2.5 MW experimental marine turbine on land in a marine environment in Cape May, with plans to be operational in late 2009.

Principals have discussed three possible sites, Cohen said, and have spoken with representatives of Cape May City's Energy Committee to consider one of those locations at the Cape May Desalination Plant off Cannery Road in Cape May. Other considerations are the U.S. Coast Guard Base, or Middle Thorofare Island where members of the commercial fishing consortium, including Snow's Doxsee and Lunds, for example, own land.

Phase 1 would consist of eight 2.5 MW marine turbines east of Atlantic City in state waters approximately three miles offshore for a total energy production of 20 MW, and plans for completion in 2010-11 at a cost of approximately \$90 million.

This phase would be financially structured in the form of a rural electric cooperative. These entities were created through the 1936 Rural Electrification Act that enabled not-for-profit energy cooperatives in rural or less-populated areas of the country, where it was not economical for for-profit electrical companies to serve, Cohen explained.

Phase 2 would consist of 66 5-MW marine turbines sited six to seven miles from the coast, east southeast of Atlantic City for a total energy production of 330 MW, and a target date for completion of 2013-14 at a cost of approximately \$1.3 billion.

This phase would be financed through another not-for-profit agency, FERN Atlantic Electric Cooperative, supported by business, tourism and Atlantic County community electric users.

Each phase is a "stand-alone" project, with the goals being to stabilize electric prices, reduce fossil fuel dependency, and reduce CO2 emissions with renewable green energy.

The Fishermen's Energy proposal supports the recently released Draft New Jersey Energy Master Plan, which calls for at least 1,000 MW of offshore wind capacity and 200 MW of onshore wind by 2020. At an April 21 Earth Day celebration in Trenton, some state leaders called for an even greater offshore wind capacity of 1,750 MW by 2020.

Cohen said he wants commercial fishermen, farmers and the general public to be involved as cooperative members or off takers of the energy and the venture will be financed through a public offering.

Originally, commercial fishermen were opposed to offshore wind turbines thinking they would adversely impact the fisheries, Cohen said. Now, the fishing industry sees the project as an opportunity rather than a threat.

According to Cohen, fisherman are particularly well suited to offshore wind development because they know how to handle heavy machinery in high winds and rough seas; control key upland assembly docks, boats and water access; and know the waters and the ocean bottom.

In addition to their own expertise, Fishermen's Energy has partnered with a professional team of specialized advisors that includes: AMEC, project engineers and environmental lead; AWS Truewind, wind resources and modeling; and Rutgers University, marine and shellfish impacts. AMEC, Cohen said, is one of the leading environmental firms with expertise in wind energy, in the world.

To find out more about Fishermen's Energy, call Communications Director Rhonda Jackson at (609) 286-9650 or visit www.fishermensenergy.com.

Contact Avedissian at (609) 886-8600 Ext 27 or at: savedissian@cmcherald.com
Contact Hart at (609) 886-8600 Ext 35 or at: jhart@cmcherald.com