

Fishermen's Energy Answers R.I. Offshore Wind Bid

Business | 1 week 5 days ago | Comments 0

By Herald Staff

CAPE MAY -- Fishermen's Energy of New Jersey, LLC, (FERN) a business founded by a core group of fishermen initiated FERN to respond to the public need to develop the ocean for renewable energy.

The following is a release from the business group issued June 4:

"Wind is a clean and constantly renewable resource, and it is FERN's goal to turn the North Atlantic coastal waters into an unmatched resource of renewable energy — windpower.

"Due to interest from our fellow fishermen in Rhode Island, FERN has sponsored Fishermen's Energy of Rhode Island, LLC (FERI) to extend similar infrastructure and benefits for the future of Rhode Island's fishing industry, while serving the energy needs of Rhode Island's public.

"FERI's fishermen-owners, whose existing facilities and industries have been mainstays of shore communities for generations, intend with this project to transition their businesses into new, dynamic technologies for the benefit of the local public and business community, all while expanding local employment.

"In implementing the Rhode Island Energy Independence 1 project, Fishermen's Energy will include the participation of the Rhode Island fishing community and will plan, build, operate, and maintain offshore wind farms to meet Rhode Island's energy master plan and renewable energy goals. FERI has assembled a team of participants with world-class experience in energy and wind project development.

"In response to a request for proposals from the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, FERI plans to build wind farms in Rhode Island waters capable of producing approximately 400 megawatts of electricity, which represents 15 percent of Rhode Island's current energy needs. FERI proposes 80 individual wind turbine generators, situated within state waters, between two to three miles off the southern coast of Block Island.

"Historically, one of the key barriers to offshore wind farms has been fishermen themselves, due to fear of loss of fishing grounds. By including this constituency, Fishermen's Energy has turned this negative into an overwhelming positive. With our combined decades of experience in the waters of the Atlantic, and our commitment to clean, safe, and renewable energy, Fishermen's Energy's offshore wind farms will ensure the future of Rhode Island's fishing industry and renewable energy for generations to come.

"Fishermen's Energy is a consortium of the principals of leading fishing companies in the region, which encompasses one of the most productive fishing grounds and seafood industries in the U.S. For more than a year, a core group of the commercial fishing industry leadership has been rethinking our opposition to offshore wind energy development. After reflection and development of a new paradigm, Fishermen's Energy has chosen to treat offshore energy as an opportunity, rather than a threat.

"In this spirit, FERI intends to be a proactive agent for change and offers Rhode Island a unique ability to harvest the sea for energy and fish, side by side, in an environmentally acceptable manner.

"Our industry husbands the renewable marine resources of the offshore waters in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the public's consumption. Therefore, we are the logical developers and harvesters of the renewable wind resources from the same waters for the benefit of the public. Our goal is to develop not the first wind farm, but to monitor and mitigate the impacts in such a manner, post construction, that if the benefits outweigh the risks, we will pursue the opportunity to help the northeast states to build out the offshore wind capacity.

"The companies involved own, operate, and provide support services year round for hundreds of fishing vessels. Collectively we have comprehensive knowledge of sea bottom conditions, marine and weather conditions, location of fish habitat, experience with the operation of heavy equipment in extreme coastal weather and sea conditions, and experience with marine construction and maintenance." said Daniel Cohen, president of Fishermen's Energy and president and principal shareholder of Atlantic Capes Fisheries, located in Cold Spring.

"Fishermen's Energy looks forward to working with the State of Rhode Island in an open and collaborative process to meet the goals outlined in their request for proposals," the release concluded.

Additional information can be obtained on Fishermen's Energy's website:

www.fishermensenergy.com

For more information on the proposal:

www.governor.ri.gov/documents/wind_rfp.pdf

<http://www.energy.ri.gov/programs/renewable.php>