

Fish Juice: N.J. Fisherman angling to develop offshore wind

File this one under if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. A group of commercial fishermen wants to get in on the rush to build offshore wind farms to generate electricity. It's an interesting about face for the fishing industry, which has traditionally fought offshore industrialization - other than their own floating seafood factories, that is. ...The effort is attracting attention in New Jersey, where the state is looking to provide grants for a pilot offshore wind farm. ... Meanwhile, if Trenton doesn't take the bait, perhaps Providence will. Last Friday, Fishermen's Energy filed one of seven proposals to build a windfarm off the coast of Rhode Island.

June 3, 2008 by Jeffrey Ball in Wall Street Journal

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One of the leading contenders is a group called Fishermen's Energy of New Jersey LLC. As the name implies, it's a group of the Garden State's leading commercial fishermen and dock operators.

About a year ago, in spring 2007, the group decided it was time to stop fighting offshore energy development and get in on the action. Offshore wind farms were inevitable, they figured, and if energy production was going to put some of their trawling grounds off limits, they decided to harvest the winds as well as the seafood.

According to a power point presentation sent to the Interior Department - not available online - the group "views offshore wind energy as an opportunity rather than a threat." Rhonda Jackson, the group's spokeswoman, says that fishermen are familiar with the weather and the ocean bottoms and already have the docks and people ready and willing to work offshore.

New Jersey has the eighth largest fishing industry in the country, thanks to a bounty of scallops, squid, clams, monkfish and mackerel. It is far behind seafood-producing powerhouses Alaska and Massachusetts.

But the Garden State wants to be home to the U.S.'s first offshore wind farm. Fishermen's Energy hopes to install eight turbines capable of 20 megawatts by 2011 off the coast of Atlantic City, and an additional 64 turbines and 320 megawatts by 2013.

The state expects to say which group it will back - and who will get up to \$19 million in grants - in August. There are four other proposals besides Fishermen's Energy, coming from: BluewaterWind, Environmental Technologies LLC, Occidental Development & Equities LLC and a joint venture of

PSEG Renewable Generation LLC and Winergy Power Holdings LLC.

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