

Large off-shore wind farm proposed 16 miles off Cape May & Atlantic counties

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2:45 p.m. Update - As many as 116 power-generating wind turbines could be built off the coast of Atlantic and Cape May counties under proposals requested by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

The proposals were submitted Monday, and could allow for a wind farm of 350 megawatts and costing around \$1 billion.

The BPU declined to comment on the bids received.

Newark-based PSEG Renewable Generation and Winergy Power Holdings submitted a joint proposal, the companies announced today.

Their project, called Garden State Offshore Energy, would consist of 96 wind turbines arranged in a rectangular grid about 16 miles off the Jersey Shore. The targeted completion date would be 2013.

In October, the BPU through its Office of Clean Energy approved a grant of up to \$19 million for the building of a wind farm. The windmills would yield enough electricity for at least 125,000 homes.

The winning company would still need the appropriate permits and to conduct further studies. Given the high costs to build wind farms and the BPU's ability to not award the grant money, such a project is still tentative.

But large-scale wind farms are an idea supported by state officials, as the harnessing of wind would contribute to New Jersey's effort to have 20 percent of its power generated by renewable, clean energy sources by 2020.

"We've located the project as far offshore as possible in order to make offshore wind a positive resource for everyone," Chris Wissemann, chief operating officer of Winergy, said in a statement. "New Jersey has been at the forefront on promoting solar energy and, with this project, it will move to the cutting edge of offshore wind power as well."

See Wednesday's editions of The Press for complete coverage.