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Monday, October 13, 2008

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## Wind energy / N.J. plan is visionary

Published: Sunday, October 12, 2008

N.J. plan is visionarySome people would like to see oil rigs sprouting off the East Coast. But New Jersey is putting its money into a far better goal - seeing wind turbines spinning on the horizon instead, providing clean and renewable energy that doesn't endanger tourism, pollute the atmosphere or contribute to global warming.

It's a laudable, truly visionary plan that moved significantly forward in the past week.

First, the Board of Public Utilities awarded its first \$4 million grant to Garden State Offshore Energy for a \$1 billion wind farm 20 miles off the coast of Avalon that is expected to generate enough power to serve 125,000 homes - the equivalent of every household in Atlantic County and part of Cape May County - as early as 2010.

Sure, there was a "favorite son" candidate in one of Garden State's competitors for the grant - Fisherman's Energy, a local Cape May County venture headed by long-time fisheries owner Dan Cohen and represented by attorney Paul Gallagher, vice president of the Atlantic County Utilities Authority. The ACUA blazed the way in New Jersey for wind power with its Atlantic County wind farm.

But the state Board of Public Utilities made the prudent move by picking a bigger, more experienced and well-financed firm for this first venture, especially considering the current credit crunch. Garden State Offshore Energy is a joint effort by PSE&G Renewable Generation and Deepwater Wind. The company is best poised to get this project underway quickly.

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The best news: Fisherman's Energy and other companies with plans for wind farms could still be in line for grants. Garden State asked for only \$4 million of the \$19 million in BPU grant money earmarked for wind energy. And last Monday, Gov. Jon S. Corzine announced he is tripling the wind-power goal originally set by the state from 1,000 megawatts to 3,000 megawatts by 2020 - enough to power 1 million homes. "We want to create this generation's race to the moon, but this time, a race to the sea, to harness this potential wind source off of our coasts," said Corzine, speaking on the back deck of The Pier at Caesars in Atlantic City.

They are powerful, visionary words - and a goal that New Jersey residents should be proud of. Few initiatives are as important as weaning the nation off foreign oil and switching to clean, renewable sources of energy. Corzine's administration has been faced with a financial crisis that has hobbled efforts to put new initiatives in place. Some of his more far-reaching proposals have failed to gain traction. But if this one succeeds - if New Jersey leads the nation in producing clean energy from wind harnessed off its coast - it will be a notable legacy indeed for future generations.

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Hey we have them up here where I live and they are quite graceful, and certainly better than a coal burner which PSE&G has on Duck Island and dumps 2.2 million lbs of some kind of sulfuric acid on the region of Mercer Co. Not to mention the smell from the burner, which wafts up the Delaware on a sultry summer day.

I've noticed that there has been not too much impact on the flora and fauna. In fact quite the opposite seems to be the case. Take note of the bears. They co-exist quite nicely with humans.

Posted by: mariar56 on Sun Oct 12, 2008, 11:11 PM [Report Abuse](#)

ACUA hasn't built more windmills because they don't have the land -- although it's worth noting that it wasn't ACUA who built the windmills in the first place, but a private company in Australia that has been dragged down by the financial crisis. As for building windmills in all those wetlands -- there is something called the NJ Department of Environmental Protection that would say that's a no-no.

Posted by: Surprised on Sun Oct 12, 2008, 7:02 PM [Report Abuse](#)

To ill-informed hanky panky- Whoa, slow down on building an argument on false pretenses !! ACUA hasn't added to its five wind turbines because of the limited land area on the island the plant inhabits. Engineers determined (yes there was actual data and engineering involved in developing the wind farm, not groundless conjecture) that more than five turbines would block each others wind considering the predominant direction it blows (again, from data generated by a wind study). They have generated 60% of the electric power required by a large industrial user, the regional wastewater plant- a vital component of the area's infrastructure. Wind energy, when properly applied, is an important component of decreasing our dependency on fossil fuels for electric power generation.

Posted by: buckdrag on Sun Oct 12, 2008, 6:08 PM [Report Abuse](#)

On both sides of the roads leading onto and off Absecon Island [i.e. Rtes 30, 40, the Expresssay and the Margate-Northfield causeway, for instance] there are miles and miles of empty wetlands bereft of anything except billboards, which could be lined with dozens, even hundreds, of beautiful, graceful wind turbines, which would resemble a Royal Palm Avenue in the tropics. Why hasn't ACUA added to its 5? Maybe because there is a dirty little secret: they aren't cost-effective. Wouldn't beachview-marring windmills built on foogings going down hundreds of feet to the ocean floor be far more costly and thus less economical? And lastly, why should a relative newcomer like me, 6 years in the area, have to bring this up? Sort of like the emperor's new clothes fable.

Posted by: hankypanky on Sun Oct 12, 2008, 8:48 AM [Report Abuse](#)

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