



State Government

7 bid to build wind farm

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PROVIDENCE — Seven developers, one as far away as Houston, have submitted proposals to build an offshore wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island.

Yesterday was the deadline for private developers to respond to the state's "request for proposals" that sought bids to finance, construct and operate a wind farm big enough to supply 15 percent of the state's electricity usage. The project, which has been proposed by Governor Carcieri, is expected to be about the same size and scope of the proposed Cape Wind project in Massachusetts and could cost up to \$1.9 billion.

(The original deadline of May 16 had been extended by two weeks to allow the developers more time to prepare their bids.)

Once the 2:30 p.m. deadline had passed, Jerome Moynihan, administrator of purchasing systems for the state, collected the packages sent by the developers and held a public opening of the bids. Representatives of two of the developers were present, as was Andrew Dzykewicz, the governor's chief energy adviser.

Moynihan slit open the boxes and envelopes, and recorded the company names. One proposal appeared to be only about 50 pages, while another took up five large binders. All came with electronic versions as well, either on a CD or DVD.

When he finished, Moynihan read the names of the companies, as well as their addresses. He said that the contents of the bids would not be released to the public until the state had actually awarded a contract.

"Releasing the details of the individual proposals prior to the technical review would likely put the state at a competitive disadvantage, which would violate the spirit if not the letter of the purchasing law," said Barbara H. Trainor, media coordinator for the governor's office.

The companies that submitted bids were:

Allco Renewable Energy Group Limited LLC, New York, N.Y.; Bluewater Wind LLC, Providence; Deep Water Wind Rhode Island LLC, Hoboken, N.J.; DKRW Wind LLC, Houston; Fishermen's Energy of Rhode Island, Bristol; Great Eastern Wind LLC, Providence; and WindPowerpro.us, Woodbridge, N.J.

Dzykewicz said he was pleased with the response. “You can stick the word ‘really’ before pleased,” Dzykewicz said. “I think it demonstrates there’s significant interest,” he said.

It was unclear up until yesterday’s deadline how many companies would make proposals, he said. There were 64 firms that registered their names with the state in order to download information about submitting a proposal, according to a list provided by Moynihan. The seven bids were not received until Thursday and yesterday.

The governor will now choose a team of state officials to examine the proposals, Dzykewicz said. The first four to six weeks will be spent doing “due diligence” on the companies — making sure they are capable of doing what they have proposed. Then the examiners will try to narrow down the proposals and invite the top contenders in for interviews.

He said he hoped a final selection could be made by the end of this summer.

The governor’s office has said the state will choose the winning proposal based on the total cost to Rhode Island ratepayers, the qualifications and experience of the developer, and the number of jobs and amount of tax revenue the project would create.

The state will not finance the project, as had once been contemplated. The winning developer will have to finance the project privately. The state will “use its best efforts” to expedite the permitting process and assure a long-term contract for energy produced by the facility.

The “preferred site” for the wind farm is off the south and western shores of Block Island, but the governor’s office said that others may be considered. The governor has said he wants proposals to include providing power to Block Island so that the 1,000 residents there can see some relief in electricity rates. They are currently paying about 40 cents per kilowatt-hour, more than four times the rate paid by mainland residents.

The Block Island site could produce electricity at the lowest rate, compared to 9 other offshore sites that state said might be suitable for a wind farm. That site actually has two adjacent sections. One is a 13.1-square-mile site just south of the island in Rhode Island waters, and the other is a 13-square-mile site southwest of the island, in federal waters. Wind projects in federal waters would have to go through a federal permitting process, while those in state waters would need only state approval.

The sites could each contain 56 wind turbines and could generate a total of 220 megawatts of electricity — enough to power 220,000 homes, the study said. That’s about 1½ times the power needed to reach the 15-percent goal.

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