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Fishermen's Energy taking first steps to developing offshore wind farm

By [Katie Eder](#)

If all goes well, renewable offshore wind energy could power a substantial part of the New Jersey coastline by 2013. The latest energy master plan, finalized by the Chris Christie administration Tuesday, supports the potential for offshore wind development, but the Board of Public Utilities requires a year's worth of actual wind measurements before it can approve the installation of turbine equipment at a specific site — and Atlantic City offshore wind energy developer **Fishermen's Energy** is aiming to get that data stat.

Last month, a group of Fishermen's engineers from **Lockheed Martin** installed a wind measurement device — typically used to detect wind hazards for military defense, meteorological research and airports — on the roof of a condominium in Margate. With the readings from the equipment, known as the WindTracer, Fishermen's hopes to get BPU approval to develop the country's first offshore wind farm 2.8 miles off the coast of Atlantic City.

In a press release, **Rich Dunk**, alternative energy applications director for Rutgers University, said the WindTracer is potentially “the most cost-effective monitoring technology for offshore wind resource assessments, (and) will enhance the accuracy and reliability of offshore weather forecasts.”

And the equipment is living up to those expectations. While Fishermen's has installed and maintained a series of meteorological towers onshore at a cost of more than \$6 million, the WindTracer's price is considerably cheaper, at less than \$2 million. The equipment's accuracy in measuring wind speed and direction is also sizable, taking 300-foot samples within a 20-mile range every few minutes.

According to this year's energy master plan, Christie supports offshore wind power because it has the potential to create long-term economic benefits for New Jersey. To that effect, in August 2010, he signed the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act, which calls for 1,100 megawatts of wind energy installed by the end of 2012. With its WindTracer equipment and meteorological towers, Fishermen's has begun to develop a demonstration offshore wind farm that will produce 25 megawatts of energy, with the hopes of obtaining subsidization from the OWEDA's offshore wind renewable energy certificate program to cultivate full-scale wind energy — and make New Jersey the leader in offshore wind power within two years.