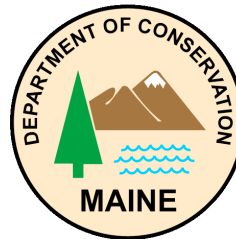


**The Maine Offshore Energy
Test Area Siting Initiative**

c/o Maine Geological Survey
22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0022
Phone: 207-287-2804, Fax: 207-287-2353



October 27, 2009

Maine narrows search for wind energy demonstration sites

Nov. 30 deadline to comment on four sites, final selection Dec. 15

MEDIA CONTACT:

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(Augusta, Maine) The Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) has selected four small areas in state waters along the Maine coast that could serve as demonstration areas for testing new offshore wind energy technologies.

In each of the four draft sites, a commercial developer would be limited to testing a maximum of two deep water, offshore wind turbines, and could also host demonstrations of new wave energy technology.

Four small portions of the planning areas off Boon Island, Damariscove Island, Monhegan Island and Cutler have been identified as candidates to host offshore wind energy demonstration projects, including the one for which the University of Maine recently received an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. The draft sites announced today comprise only a small area within the original and much larger areas identified earlier this summer.

“In June we started with a series of basic criteria to identify seven planning areas along the coast, which altogether encompassed one hundred and seventy square miles of ocean bottom,” said Robert Marvinney, state geologist. “Since July we’ve had almost twenty intensive meetings with stakeholders, seeking detailed feedback.

“We got the feedback. Public participation has been outstanding, and using information from fishermen, boaters, fish and wildlife biologists and other stakeholders, we designed an objective ranking system. That enabled us to narrow things down, and preliminarily select four much smaller areas that total just seven square miles, each ranging from one to two square miles.”

Kathleen Leyden, director of the Maine Coastal Program at the State Planning Office, is responsible for working with various stakeholders to ensure a healthy coast and vibrant coastal communities. She said the extensive outreach process this summer and fall enabled designation of the four draft sites to be done as collaboratively as possible.

“We were well aware before we even started that Maine’s coastal waters are a heavily used resource, by fishermen, birds, marine mammals, sailors, you name it, the list goes on,” Leyden said. “The Legislature unanimously passed the law that requires us to identify the sites, and we will satisfy that requirement having worked very hard to minimize disruption and inconvenience to existing users.”

Legislation passed unanimously in June mandates that the Department of Conservation and the State Planning Office work together to identify between one and five demonstration sites for offshore

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Mapping wind energy demonstration sites, cont.

wind in Maine's coastal waters. The sites will serve as locations for the testing of all the components necessary to develop deep-water, offshore wind power, including floating platforms, anchoring systems, and new lightweight blade composites. They will also monitor the impacts, if any, of offshore wind systems on the environment. The law mandates that one site be designated as a wind energy research center operated by the University of Maine. State agencies are required to identify the sites by December 15th.

Marvinney said the collaborative outreach process allowed state officials to augment data they had already compiled on wind speeds, bathymetry, shipping lanes and seafloor obstructions. The DOC is making public a memo called "Draft Site Selection Methodology" that describes the analysis and ranking methodology used to identify the four draft sites. Maps of the four draft sites are also available online, along with the memo on methodology, at the Department of Conservation's website. (**PRESS:** for PDF copies of maps and/or methodology memo, file a request at: markrobinson@maine.rr.com.)

The four draft sites are not final. Marvinney said his team will accept written comment from the general public and stakeholders until November 30th.

"We're far from done. This process is transparent, and I urge anyone who wants to submit an opinion, or technical data, to write to the Department of Conservation," Marvinney said.

Marvinney said comments can be submitted online at the DOC website, and written comments on the draft sites can be mailed to:

**Wind Energy Site Selection
c/o Dan Prichard
Department of Conservation
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022**

The site selection process is one small part of an energy and economic development initiative for Maine that has been getting a lot of attention recently. Less than two weeks ago the U.S. Department of Energy chose the University of Maine to receive up to \$8 million to fund its offshore wind energy research area, which will be in one of the four draft sites. Over 30 public and private partners, from the University of Maine and Maine Maritime Academy to Bath Iron Works and Cianbro Corporation, joined together to form the consortium that won the grant. Still pending is another \$5 million for the offshore wind research center in the final version of the federal Energy and Water Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010. The bill awaits a signature from President Barack Obama.

"The site selection process for testing new technologies is part of a unique opportunity for the state," Marvinney said. "Maine has the chance to be a world leader in this burgeoning industry, which is clearly taking off right now."

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Web site, Testing Ocean Energy in Maine:

www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/oceanenergy/oceanenergy.shtml

Web site, Ocean Energy Task Force:

www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/OETF/