

## New York State Wind Energy News Bulletin December 2010

This free monthly wind news bulletin is produced and distributed by Pace Energy and Climate Center, in association with Citizens Campaign for the Environment and Alliance for Clean Energy New York, Inc. To subscribe or unsubscribe, email Todd Olinsky-Paul at [tolinskypaul@law.pace.edu](mailto:tolinskypaul@law.pace.edu).

### Local Developments

#### Lake Ontario Region

##### **Hammond Considers Property Value Guarantee; Iberdrola Considers Pulling The Plug; Wind Committee Hears Citizens' Group**

The Hammond Wind Committee has proposed a Residential Property Value Guarantee Agreement that would require wind developers to compensate property owners if property values dropped due to the presence of wind turbines. In addition, the agreement would require wind developers to purchase the homes of homeowners opposed to living next to a wind turbine. The agreement would apply to any property within two miles of a wind turbine. But Iberdrola Renewables has said it will abandon plans for a wind farm in Hammond if the proposal becomes law. Iberdrola says the proposed law would make the wind project unworkable. The proposal will now be considered by the Town Council, with a vote expected sometime in January.

At its December 16 meeting, the Hammond Wind Committee heard recommendations from Concerned Residents of Hammond (CROH) on setback requirements. The citizens' group believes current setbacks, which require turbines to be 714 feet from property lines, roads, structures and the edge of the wind overlay district, and 1,500 feet from off-site residences, are inadequate. CROH president Mary Hamilton recommended setbacks of 5,000 feet from the Village of Hammond and sensitive areas; 3,000 feet from roads, property lines and other turbines; and 1,000 feet from wetlands. She also recommended that turbines be placed at least two miles from the shorelines of the St. Lawrence River and Black Lake. Sources: Watertown Daily Times; The Journal (Ogdensburg).

##### **Cape Vincent Polarization Said To Hurt Community Wind Effort**

Organizers of a community wind effort in Cape Vincent are blaming a loss of support on the high-profile rancor over two proposed utility-scale wind projects, saying the issue has polarized the community. Sustainable Energy Development, a company that specializes in helping communities put together community wind projects, has a meteorological tower in the town, but local organizers, who started the St. Lawrence River Public Power Association six years ago, are having difficulty finding a critical mass of supportive residents to push the project forward. Community wind is an alternative, bottom-up model

for wind energy development, in which the local community retains control, and often ownership, of the project. The model relies heavily on public participation and requires a devoted core group of area residents to guide the project and rally support. Source: Watertown Daily Times.

### **Cambria Winery Threatens Lawsuit Over Windmill Denial**

The owners of Arrowhead Spring Vineyards said they will sue the Town of Cambria after their application to install a wind turbine was denied. The vineyard had applied to install a 132-foot wind turbine to power both the winemaking operation and the owners' home, which share a single electric meter. But the application was denied by the town Planning Board, which said the fact that the turbine would provide power to a residence as well as an agricultural operation means it is not eligible for a simple site plan review, and will require a special use permit. The planning board was also concerned about noise, and the fact that the turbine height exceeds the 100-foot mark. Town law states that any turbine over 100 feet tall is considered commercial and requires a special use permit. Source: BuffaloNews.com.

### **Jefferson County Tax-Exempt Policy Remains As-Is**

Following years of discussion and debate, the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) has decided not to alter its uniform tax-exempt policy, which governs payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs), an alternate form of municipal payment often used by wind farms. The decision means that local municipalities will continue to define PILOTs for wind farms on a case-by-case basis. An IDA board member stated that since wind farms are not all the same, they should not all be covered by a single uniform policy. Source: WatertownDailyTimes.com.

## **Southern Tier Region**

### **Howard Hears Safety And Construction Plan, Institutes Toll-Free Complaint Line**

At a meeting earlier this month, Everpower Renewables and Delaney Construction provided information on safety plans for the Howard wind project, as well as the construction schedule for the upcoming year. The safety plan covered everything from reporting injuries to enforcing a drug-free workplace to fire issues and poison control. The construction plan included moving equipment into the area in December, in preparation for construction in Spring 2011. Turbine delivery and tower erection will start in the summer of 2011, with the first turbine scheduled for completion on July 25. Equipment should be removed and access roads restored to their pre-construction state by late 2011.

Questions or complaints around the Howard wind project can now be voiced 24 hours a day. Howard's Planning Board has approved a call center that will route all calls to the town's hired environmental monitor, to the construction company working on the wind project, and to an Everpower employee. The nature of the complaints will also be made available to the Town Board and the town engineer. The call center will be open until one year after the turbine construction is complete. The toll-free number is 1-888-450-6731.

Complaints can also be sent in writing to Howard Wind LLC. Source: EveningTribune.com (Hornell).

## **Central Region**

### **New Hartford Reviews Zoning, Plans Wind Regulations**

The New Hartford Town Board is reviewing the town's zoning ordinance to determine how existing laws might be amended to regulate the use and construction of utility-scale and residential wind turbines. The Town Board hopes to prepare for future wind project proposals by establishing laws regulating setbacks, noise, and other siting issues in the near future, before a development proposal is on the table. Public input will be sought, and the board hopes to have a law in place by mid-2011. Source: Utica Observer-Dispatch.

## **Fingerlakes Region**

### **Prattsburgh And Italy To Talk With Ecogen**

The towns of Prattsburgh and Italy are planning a three-way meeting with wind energy developer Ecogen after a State Supreme Court justice advised the three parties to reach a compromise out of court. The parties have been involved in legal disputes since the newly elected Prattsburgh Town Board rescinded a development agreement with Ecogen approved by the previous board, and Italy denied necessary permits to proceed with construction. Ecogen plans to develop 16 turbines in Prattsburgh and 18 turbines in Italy. Source: MPNnow.com (Canandaigua).

### **Perry Considers Strict Turbine Height Limit**

The Perry Planning Board is considering a height limit for utility scale wind turbines similar to that instituted by the neighboring town of Warsaw, which limited tower height to 75 feet on parcels up to five acres in size, and 125 feet on parcels of five acres or more. This is generally viewed as a *de facto* ban on wind projects, since most modern utility-scale turbines are in the 400-foot range. However, Perry planners say they'd like to allow smaller turbines for private farm and business use. The town has a moratorium in place to allow it time to revise its wind turbine regulations. Source: TheDailyNewsOnline.com (Batavia).

## **Industry News**

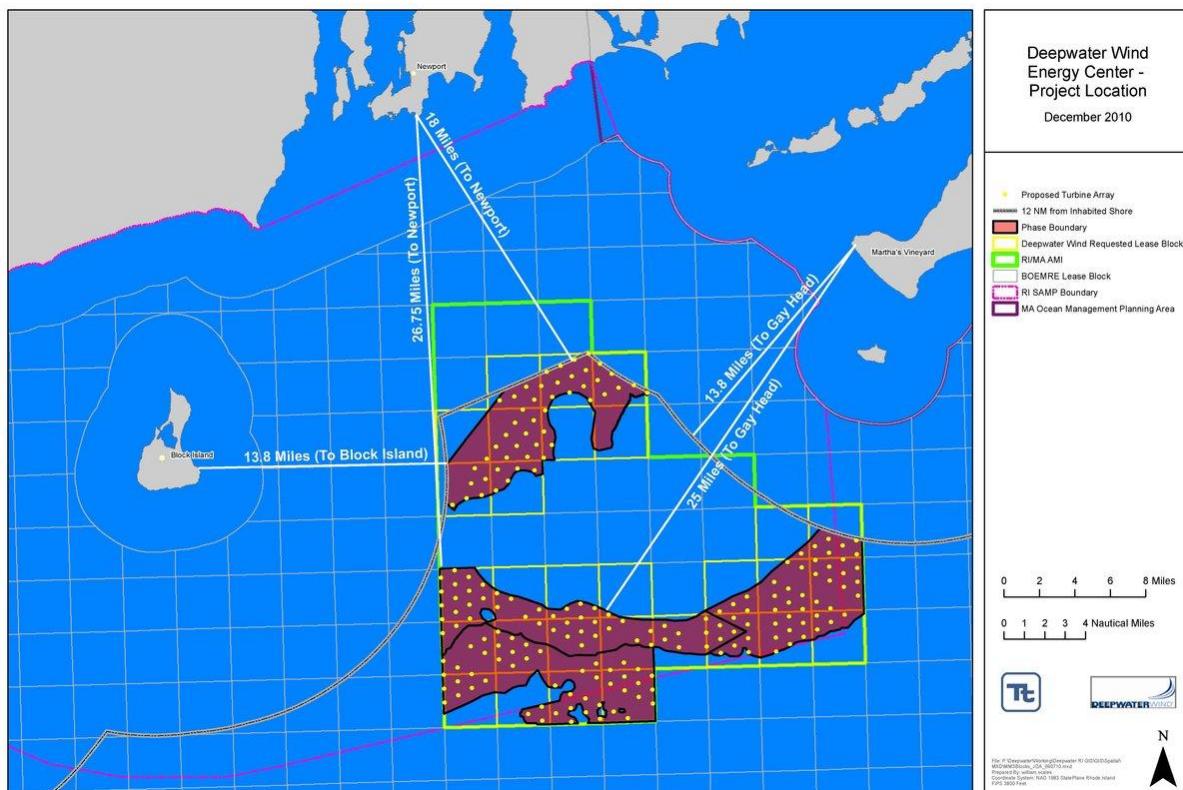
### **U.S. Wind Installations Down In 2010**

With just 1,634 MW of new wind generation installed in the U.S. to date in 2010, annual wind installations are at their lowest rate since 2006, and down by 72% compared to 2009. In 2010, wind projects in the U.S. were installed at half the European rate, and a third of the rate in China. China and Europe, which each have something resembling a national renewable portfolio standard, saw more than \$35 billion invested in wind installations this year—nearly four times the investment level in the U.S.

The decrease in U.S. wind installations is due in part to low electricity prices, in part to a lower demand for power, and in part to a lack of confidence in long-term federal renewable energy policy. In New York, decreases in new wind installation are also due in part to lower natural gas prices. Source: EnergyBiz.com.

### Offshore Wind Farm Could Link New York, New England Grids

A 1,000 MW offshore wind project proposed for a location between Rhode Island and eastern Long Island would provide power to both New York and New England while also linking the two electric grids through underwater power cables. Since wind turbines do not always run at full capacity, there would often be excess capacity in the cables to allow the flow of lower-priced electricity from the north to the relatively higher-priced markets in New York. The underwater cable would bypass the highly congested area between Connecticut and southern New York, where land-based transmission lines have little excess capacity, and new lines are very difficult to site. The wind farm proposed by Deepwater Wind would use large turbines with generating capacities of 5 to 6 MW each, and would cover an area of 270 square miles. The project is in the planning phase and requires approval from the Independent System Operators in both New York and New England, as well as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Interior Department. It will also require a lot of additional investment money. The wind farm is projected to cost \$4-\$5 billion, with another \$500 million to \$1 billion for the 150-mile underwater transmission cable. Source: New York Times.



Source: New York Times

### **Small Wind Turbine Manufacturer Floats New Business Model**

Xzeres, an Oregon-based manufacturer of residential-scale wind turbines, is trying a new financing strategy to sell its wind turbines: it will retain ownership of the turbines it installs on customers' property, and sell the electricity produced to the customer at a discounted rate. The customer pays a lower rate for electricity than they would pay to the local utility, and after a few years, when they have paid off the price of the turbine, they own it. Until that time, the company takes care of maintenance on the turbines it installs. The strategy has worked for the solar industry, and Xzeres is hoping it will translate well to the residential wind industry. Source: New York Times.

## **Resources**

### **NYSERDA Funding For On-Site Wind Turbines**

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has increased funding to aid installation of small-scale wind turbines for homes, schools, businesses and farms. Over the next five years, \$16.6 million will be allocated through the Customer-Sited Wind Turbine Incentive program. Individual payments will be based on the predicted electricity output of the turbine; the incentives will be limited to wind turbines up to 600 kW in size, and up to \$400,000 in cost per turbine. Available funding may support up to 30% of turbine purchase and installation costs. Over the previous two years, NYSERDA funding has supported 61 small wind projects totaling 1.2 MW of generation capacity. Additional information and applications for funding may be found at: <http://www.nyserda.org/funding/2097pon.asp>. Source: BrighterEnergy.org; Syracuse.com; Utica Daily News.

### **National Wildlife Federation Report On Offshore Wind**

The National Wildlife Federation has released a report titled "Offshore Wind in the Atlantic: Growing Momentum for Jobs, Energy Independence, Clean Air, and Wildlife Protection." According to the report, the Atlantic Ocean has significant offshore wind potential, with over 212 GW of wind resources in shallow waters, where wind turbine installation is easier (the west coast offers good wind resources but much deeper waters, making turbine installations there more difficult). Approximately 6 GW of offshore wind projects have been proposed along the Atlantic coast; this is the equivalent of about five coal-fired power plants, and enough to power about 1.5 million average U.S. homes. However, none of the proposed offshore projects have yet been built, leaving the U.S. far behind Europe, which has nearly 1,000 operating offshore turbines. The full report can be found online at <http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/News-by-Topic/Global-Warming/2010/~/media/PDFs/Global%20Warming/Reports/NWF-Offshore-Wind-in-the-Atlantic.ashx>. Source: National Wildlife Federation.