



COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 278
Saunderstown, RI 02874
Phone (401) 515-4662
Fax: (401) 515-4663
Website: www.cfrfoundation.org

November 19, 2008

Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 115
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Concerns regarding proposed offshore wind farm - Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

Dear Governor Carcieri,

I am writing to express the concern of the Board of Directors of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation that plans to construct an offshore wind farm and to develop an Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) are preceding without adequate field research in the area of fisheries resources. The sites being considered for an offshore wind farm, and the study and planning area delineated in the Ocean SAMP that includes both state and federal waters are critical to the livelihoods of many in the Rhode Island commercial fishing fleet.

It is the Foundation's understanding that a series of four stakeholder meetings concerning the proposed offshore wind farm project were convened in 2007, and a final report was issued by the Peregrine Energy Group Inc. in February 2008. Representatives of the commercial fishing industry did participate in these stakeholder meetings, but they have indicated that when this process stopped, their opportunities to be involved in the research and design phases of the project also stopped.

In regards to the Ocean SAMP process which will result in zoning uses off the coast of Rhode Island, the Foundation is concerned that the research program currently underway does not include any fisheries field research. This program, funded in the amount of \$3.2 million, is to provide the basis of information on which a SAMP will be developed but only includes one fisheries related project – a project designed to develop commercial and recreational fisheries usage maps for the SAMP area based on fishermen's input.

It is the viewpoint of the Foundation that the establishment of important baseline information on commercially valuable fishery resources in the possible wind farm sites and the Ocean SAMP area in general is critical to mitigating any potential harmful impacts. Fishermen have expressed their concerns about the need to fully understand potential impacts on vital breeding, feeding, and nursery areas; how natural patterns of fish/crustacean behavior may change in response to wind farm construction and operations; how disturbances to the marine environment left behind from construction activities will be repaired; and how fishing vessel transit patterns and fishing activities will be curtailed during and after construction.

There is deep concern that the research program is proceeding without the involvement of the commercial fishing industry both in terms of 1) deciding what research is needed; and 2) being part of the research teams conducting the field research. This is particularly disturbing considering that the Rhode Island commercial fishing industry is a valuable resource to the state both in terms of the income it generates and the knowledge its members hold regarding the natural systems at work in our offshore waters.

The Board of Directors of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation concurs with commercial fishing industry leaders and others that it is important for the state to move in the direction of developing alternative energy sources to generate jobs, reduce our carbon emissions, and secure our state's energy future. While they see the value in pursuing the development of an offshore wind farm, they feel strongly that such projects need to be implemented responsibly, and with a full understanding of the potential impacts.

The Foundation's overall mission is to foster working relationships among members of the commercial fishing industry, scientists, and managers to carry out research projects that will provide pertinent information for management decisions. With this in mind, the Foundation offers its assistance to work with those involved in the wind farm proposal and the Ocean SAMP process to find a meaningful way for the commercial fishing industry to be engaged in the research, planning, and monitoring phases of the offshore wind farm proposal. From the Foundation's perspective, there is a critical need to identify potential negative impacts to fisheries resources and find solutions to potential problems early in the process so the state can move forward in these new growth areas without jeopardizing or sacrificing its existing businesses and livelihoods, or an important component of its local food supply.

If you have any questions, please feel free to have your staff contact me. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Peg Petruny-Parker, Executive Director
Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

Phone: (401) 515-4662
Fax: (401) 515-4663
E-mail: pparker@cfrfoundation.org

Cc:

- Members of the Board of Directors, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
- U.S. Senator Jack Reed
- U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
- U.S. Representative James Langevin
- U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy
- Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts
- Rep. William J. Murphy, Speaker, RI House of Representatives
- Senator Joseph A. Montalbano, President, RI Senate
- Senator M. Teresa Paiva-Weed, Majority Leader, RI Senate
- Senator Susan Sosnowski, Chair, Environment and Agriculture Committee, RI Senate
- Rep. Gordon D. Fox, Majority Leader, RI House of Representatives
- Rep. Jan P. Malik, Chair, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, RI House of Representatives,
- Rep. Eileen Naughton, Chair, Environmental Accountability Committee, RI House of Representatives
- Andrew Dzykewicz, Commissioner, RI Office of Energy Resources
- Saul Kaplan, Executive Director, RI Economic Development Corporation
- Michael M. Tikoian, Chair, RI Coastal Resources Management Council
- Grover Fugate, Executive Director, RI Coastal Resources Management Council, Project Manager, Ocean SAMP
- W. Michael Sullivan, Director, RI Department of Environmental Management
- John Pappalardo, Chair, New England Fisheries Management Council
- Paul Howard, Executive Director, New England Fisheries Management Council
- George D. Lapointe, Chair, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- John Vince O'Shea, Executive Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- RI Commercial Fisheries Center - Leaders of RI commercial fishermen associations