



## Ocean Zoning and Offshore Wind Farms in Rhode Island

DECEMBER 2008

P.O. BOX 5161, WAKEFIELD, RI 02880 [www.cfcri.com](http://www.cfcri.com) Email: [CFCenterRI@gmail.com](mailto:CFCenterRI@gmail.com)

*Season's greetings to all of the members of the Commercial Fisheries Center of R.I.*

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I have been asked to write an open letter of sorts for this special edition of the CFCRI newsletter regarding the ongoing Ocean SAMP process and the anticipated development of wind farms off of our coast. This is the first time that we have elected to produce a single subject, heads up issue and present it to the membership as a single body. CFCRI members currently include: The R.I. Commercial Fisherman's Assn., The R.I. Lobstermen's Assn, Ocean State Fisherman's Assn., The R.I. Shellfisherman's Assn., The R.I. Charter Boat Assn., The Atlantic Offshore Lobsterman's Assn., The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, The Point Judith

Fishermen's Memorial Foundation, and the RI Monkfishermen's Assn. Additionally, the Center has been working with the Sakonnet Point Fishermen's Association on this issue. The Commercial Fisheries Center of RI is a proud exclamation of our diversity and mutual respect, and a celebration of our ability to work together on themes that are of common interest to all who call R.I. their home port.

Rhode Island is a very strange little place. It seems that we are either the first or last, the best or worst at one thing or another. In the case of ocean site wind energy it seems that we are going in a direction that would have us become at least one of these, only time will tell how these titles are paired. Hopefully, we will be the best. Being the first means little if we end up poorer for our effort. One thing is certain, how we choose to represent ourselves as an industry will have a profound impact on those who fish off of our coast for the rest of time. The quality and content of our engagement will shape the outcome for fishermen on both the East and West Coasts of the country.

We are presently poised to be the first state to develop wind farms offshore and like it or not, there is an awful lot of responsibility being placed on our shoulders. It is in times like these that a unified voice representing legitimate concerns will be heard above all others. Dragger men supporting lobstermen, supporting gillnetters, supporting charter boatmen, supporting science, supporting us all. Like I said, previously, Rhode Island is a very strange little place.

That we have made preparation to vigorously defend that which is dear to us should not lead our readers to the conclusion that we are in any way opposed to the development of wind farms. That is not the case. We are supportive but, as an industry, do not wish to shoulder a disproportionate burden as we share in the benefits of this project with our fellow Rhode Islanders. As fishermen and lobstermen we find ourselves in a difficult position. We are vulnerable to the cost of and the dependence on foreign oil as well as being held accountable for the continued recovery of critical stocks. Disregarding one over the other is a fool's errand that we need not make or be sent on.

As processes go, the Ocean SAMP seems fairly open and straight forward enough. Unfortunately, the very essence of a zoning process is presumably to define some level of exclusivity for at least a portion of the ocean. Again, the devil is in the details. How much, how many, how exclusive? We will be quite awhile simply developing questions. But that is what we were invited to do, and that is how this part of the process will work the best. But what of the other parts? Certainly all that there is to constructing an ocean site wind farm cannot be contained in one small room at the Coastal Institute. I looked around at the last meeting and didn't even see a shovel. How can you be a wind farmer without a shovel? I'm thinking that there must be somethin' else goin' on somewhere else as well. I'm also thinking that that is where we want and need to be. As you read this, there have been two Ocean SAMP meetings to date. You know how it goes at a party, the music was playing but nobody was really dancin' yet. I think we'll be dancing fairly soon.

*continued page two*

If it is our goal to be truly informative, the sole, common, earthly task of all newsletters, then, there are some other CFCRI matters that have gone unmentioned for far too long. First and foremost is the fact that we have a new President. Russ Wallis, the President of The Ocean State Fisherman's Assn, has graciously agreed to be our new leader. Russ is a perfect choice for the job. He is an active lobsterman with vast experience. He is well known and respected throughout the industry and State House alike and has expressed, time and time again, his willingness and desire to make the Fisheries Center flourish. I have been the President of the Fisheries Center since its inception and feel that I am no longer able to give the time to the position that it deserves. The Center's membership is growing and with it the time required to do the job effectively. I have enjoyed the time spent in the development of the center immensely and intend to remain on the board in a somewhat reduced capacity. President Wallis, cagily, suggested that I might enjoy the restful bliss that he had long thought to accompany the position of treasurer. Unwittingly, I was quick to agree, far too eager for, and in need of rest. For the record, a volunteer is someone who clearly does not understand the question being asked. That's O.K. He owed me one.... I told him that the power and position of President was an aphrodisiac.

Also, to assist us in maintaining an ongoing, productive dialogue between the State of R.I., D.E.M., C.R.M.C., our industry members, and the indigenous scientific community that is to our liking, we have hired Kate O'Malley to be our communications coordinator. Kate comes to us highly recommended and respected for her past book of work. Welcome aboard Kate!

**Standing by all**



Christopher Brown

## **Where does industry stand?**

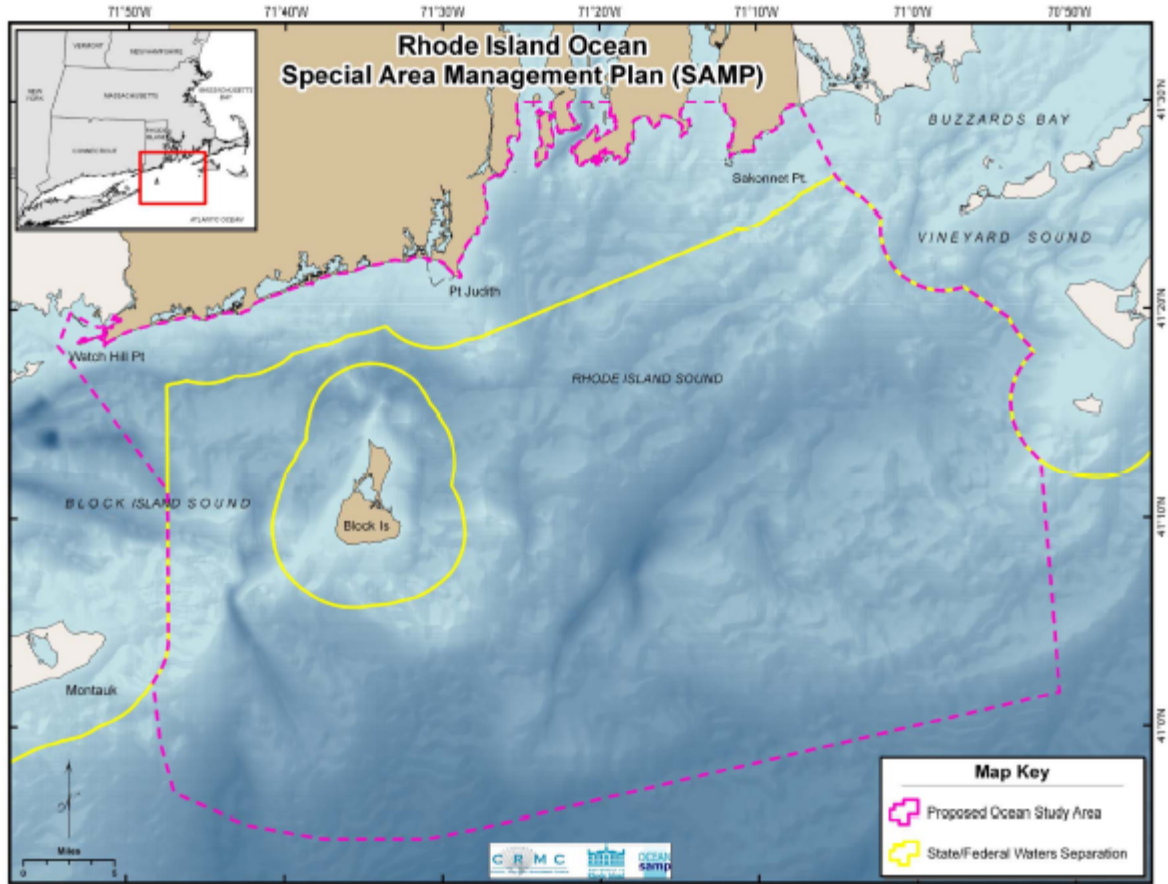
CFCRI leaders are not opposed to the state's efforts to develop alternative energy sources including off shore wind farms, but we have questions and concerns. We are deeply concerned that the Ocean SAMP research program does not adequately address field research needed to mitigate negative impacts to the commercial fishing industry (see newsletter page 6 for details). We feel strongly that such projects need to be implemented responsibly, and the concerns and input of the commercial fishing industry need to be carefully considered throughout all phases of the process.

## **What You Should Know:**

- RI is to be a national test case for the development of an offshore wind farm, the first project of its kind in the U.S.
- How this is handled will set a precedent for our nation's entire fishing industry, as this technology advances up and down the East and West coasts of our country. 51,000 Wind Turbines are projected for the Northeast Coast alone.
- Ocean Zoning is coming – Within two years RI expects to have completed a plan to zone its offshore waters (see boundary map page 3) for multiple uses beyond what industry has ever dealt with previously.
- This is being done through the Ocean Special Area Management Plan, a process being driven by the need to site the wind farm and funded with \$3.2 million from the state's "Renewable Energy Fund". We have been told the state expects, upon completion of the process, to be reimbursed by the wind farm developer for this expense.
- The first objective of the Ocean SAMP that is listed in the CRMC/URI proposal is to "streamline cumbersome federal and state permitting processes and establish a more cost-effective permitting environment for investors."
- The commercial fishing industry in RI is searching for a way to be meaningfully engaged in the research, planning, implementation and monitoring phases of both the offshore wind farm project and the Ocean SAMP development process and CFCRI leaders presented concerns and questions at an 11/25/08 meeting with members of the Governor's staff (see newsletter pages 4 and 5 for details).
- To this end, the Commercial Fisheries Center of RI is committed to assisting industry in organizing and uniting around this issue. Members can now email us at [cfcenterri@gmail.com](mailto:cfcenterri@gmail.com). CFCRI will be using this address to compile member feedback regarding questions, issues of concern, and suggestions for effective participation around the issues of ocean zoning and siting of offshore energy projects. For ongoing updates send us your email address and visit our website at [www.cfcri.com](http://www.cfcri.com).

## Proposed RI Ocean SAMP Boundary Map

Available to view online at: <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/map.html>



October 6, 2008

## Industry Questions Posed to State Officials by CFCRI Leaders

On November 25, 2008 CFCRI leaders met with members of the Governor's staff and are currently awaiting answers to questions we submitted (see newsletter page 5). Included below is the CFCRI's follow-up letter to the Governor:

December 1, 2008

The Honorable Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor of the State of Rhode Island  
State House, Room 115  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 11/25/08 meeting to discuss industry questions regarding proposed offshore wind farm project attended by the following: Stacy Ambrozik of Governor's Policy Office; Director W. Michael Sullivan and Bob Ballou of RI DEM; Commissioner Andrew Dzykowitz of Office of Energy Resources; Ames Colt, Chair of RI Bays Rivers & Watershed Coordination Team; Chris Brown of RI Commercial Fishermen's Assoc., Lanny Dellinger and Bill McElroy of RI Lobstermen's Assoc., Russ Wallis of Ocean State Fishermen's Assoc., David Spencer of Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, Ted Platz of RI Monkfishermen's Association; Kate O'Malley of Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island.

Dear Governor Carcieri:

On November 25, 2008, leaders of the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island had the opportunity to meet with members of your staff. I am writing on their behalf to express our thanks for the time extended us and for the constructive discussion held regarding the State's desire to work closely with the RI commercial fishing industry as the proposal for an offshore wind farm project moves forward.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to present the enclosed list of questions on behalf of our collective association members who are eager to learn more about this project. It is our goal to stay well informed and the written responses to our memo which were promised will be a great help to us as we continue to communicate with our various members. Our sense from your representatives was that you recognize the unique nature of the fishing industry's relationship to this project both as a key stakeholder group and as a resource with special expertise of value to the planning and implementation of this project. We were pleased to receive assurances that the State is looking for industry to be meaningfully engaged.

In turn, the RI commercial fishing industry recognizes that the State is currently in the forefront nationally and that this is an unprecedented, first of a kind project. It will be looked upon as a national model as this technology advances up and down the coastlines of our nation. We are agreed that there is much at stake here. It is our hope that we can effectively participate in making this a national success, sharing in the benefits of the wind farm with our fellow RI citizens without bearing a disproportionate burden.

We look forward to the opportunity to work together and thank you for your consideration and assistance in helping us to keep our membership informed and engaged.

Sincerely,



Christopher Brown  
Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island  
Email: [CFCenterRI@gmail.com](mailto:CFCenterRI@gmail.com)

**Enclosure to 12/1/08 CFCRI Letter to Governor Carcieri:**

Memorandum

Date: Nov. 25, 2008

To: Chris Long, Policy Advisor for Governor Donald Carcieri

From: RI Commercial Fisheries Center – Leaders of RI commercial fishermen's associations: RI Commercial Fishermen's Association, RI Lobstermen's Association, Ocean State Fishermen's Association, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association

Re: Meeting to discuss questions about proposed offshore wind farm project

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We have a series of questions we would appreciate receiving Governor Carcieri's responses to. Members of our commercial fishermen associations are eager to learn more about the plans to construct an offshore wind farm. As industry leaders, our goal is to stay well informed on their behalf, and to provide accurate information to our members so the commercial fishing industry can have a meaningful and constructive role as this proposal idea moves forward.

There is confusion about the planning and implementation process for the proposed wind farm. It would be very helpful if we could provide answers to the following questions:

Process:

- There appear to be two different stakeholder processes involved: 1) the stakeholder process that was run by Peregrine Energy Group Inc. which concluded with a final report issued in February 2008, and 2) the stakeholder process that has just begun in connection with the Ocean SAM Plan process. How will these two processes come together?
- Who will make the final decision about the size and location of the offshore wind farm?
- What is RI DEM's role in the decision-making process?
- How does the commercial fishing industry fit into the decision-making process?

Implementation of Wind Farm Proposal:

- Is there a Design Team now working on the wind farm proposal? If not, when will one be formed?
- If so, will the commercial fishing industry be given an opportunity to work with the Design Team to help find the best solutions to any potential impact problems?
- Will the commercial fishing industry be given an opportunity to be involved in the processes of site selection, construction planning, and monitoring?

Research Needs:

- The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation recently wrote a letter to the Governor regarding its concerns about the lack of fisheries related field research in the Ocean SAM Plan research program underway. What is the Governor's response to the concerns raised in that letter?
- What are the Governor's plans for correcting the lack of fisheries related field research?
- Will there be additional funding issued for research to address potential impacts to commercially important species harvested in offshore waters?

Jurisdictions:

- What is the process for working with federal agencies that exercise jurisdiction in federal waters?
- How will the federal and regional fisheries governance structure i.e. New England Fisheries Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission be brought into this offshore wind farm proposal and Ocean SAM Plan planning process?

General:

- How can the RI commercial fishing industry best work with you and the directors of state agencies to help move the wind farm proposal forward without unduly jeopardizing the interests of the RI commercial fishing fleet?

## **Fisheries Research Questions & Concerns**

To: Commercial Fishing Community

From: P. Parker, Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

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. They are concerned, however, that plans to construct an offshore wind farm and to zone uses in both state and federal waters off of Rhode Island's coast (Ocean SAMP process) are proceeding without adequate fisheries related field research, and expressed this in a letter from the Foundation to Governor Carcieri sent on November 19, 2008 (for a full copy of this letter visit [www.cfrfoundation.org](http://www.cfrfoundation.org)). These concerns were based on the following information:

- A \$3.2 million research program is underway to support the Ocean SAMP process but this program does not include any fisheries field research.
- The SAMP research program 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 – information that could be considered "anecdotal" if it is not substantiated with field research.
- There is no field research underway to establish important baseline information for evaluating:
  - potential impacts on vital breeding, feeding, and nursery areas;
  - how patterns of fish/crustacean behavior may change in response to wind farm construction activities and operations;
  - how disturbances to the marine environment left behind from construction activities will be repaired;
  - how fishing vessel transit patterns and fishing activities will be curtailed during and after construction.

The Foundation has concluded that while the current research projects being conducted are important, the research program is not complete. The potential impacts from projects such as an offshore wind farm on commercially valuable fishery resources are not being properly evaluated. The Foundation is concerned that critical "ocean zoning" decisions will be based on existing fisheries data which is incomplete, inaccurate, untimely, and not site specific.

Appropriate, up to date information is needed to site a wind farm project in a location that will have the least amount of negative impacts on already stressed marine fishery resources. To accomplish this, members of the commercial fishing industry need to be 1) directly involved in deciding what research is needed, and 2) given an opportunity to be part of the field research teams. Good information is needed to make good decisions.

## Important Websites for More Info

RI Ocean Special Area Management Plan Home Page at:

<http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/>

Proposal by Coastal Resources Management Council and the University of Rhode Island to the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources for work to support the Ocean SAM Plan process at:

[http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/pdf/OS\\_Proposal.pdf](http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/pdf/OS_Proposal.pdf)

RI. Office of Energy Resources

<http://www.energy.ri.gov/programs/renewable.php>

Commercial Fisheries Center of RI

<http://www.cfcri.com>

"The Development of Marine Based Wind Energy Generation and Inshore Fisheries in UK Waters: Are They Compatible?" 2005 article on the impact of marine based wind energy on inshore fisheries, at:

[http://www.hull.ac.uk/cems/downloads/WOTS\\_rodmeil\\_et\\_al.pdf](http://www.hull.ac.uk/cems/downloads/WOTS_rodmeil_et_al.pdf)

The British Wind Energy Association – Recommendation for Fisheries Liaison.

Information on a process for including the fishing industry in offshore wind farm projects from the planning stage through to the monitoring stage. Copies available online at:

<http://www.bwea.com/pdf/FisheriesBP.pdf>

Massachusetts Ocean Coalition

<http://www.massocceanaction.org/resources.html>

Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

<http://www.cfrfoundation.org>

Recent *Providence Journal* articles at:

<http://bizblog.projo.com/2008/12/ceo-leaves-deve.html#more>

[http://www.projo.com/news/environment/content/Wave\\_Energy\\_Proposal\\_12-05-08\\_EVCHCMP\\_v17.3d53604.html#](http://www.projo.com/news/environment/content/Wave_Energy_Proposal_12-05-08_EVCHCMP_v17.3d53604.html#)

[http://www.projo.com/news/content/wind\\_developer\\_selected\\_09-25-08\\_AOBN21P\\_v27.1b2a512.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/wind_developer_selected_09-25-08_AOBN21P_v27.1b2a512.html)

## We Need Your Help!

Your contributions will help us to keep you informed and continue to represent industry interests on these issues. As these projects move forward, the manner in which ocean zoning and offshore energy site planning is handled in RI will serve as a national model. Much is at stake for the survival of the RI fishing fleet and for the industry nation wide as this technology advances up and down the coastlines of our nation. If ever there was a need to be united it is now. **Contributions can be made payable to the Commercial Fisheries Center of RI and mailed to CFCRI PO Box 5161, Wakefield, RI 02880**

## We want Your Feedback on these Issues!

We will be compiling industry feedback. Submit Comments to [CFCenterRI@gmail.com](mailto:CFCenterRI@gmail.com)

And send us your email address now so we can keep you posted!