

Friends of Acadia Advocacy Alert

No. 23, September 3, 2009

The State of Maine is proposing several test locations for offshore, deepwater, wind energy technologies. One of these areas is off the southern tip of Isle au Haut, near Acadia National Park. We encourage you to attend one of the state's public meetings regarding their proposal and express your concerns about the location of wind turbines off the shores of Acadia National Park's Isle au Haut District.

In a nutshell...

Maine has outstanding offshore wind energy resources. In June 2009, the state legislature mandated that the Department of Conservation and the State Planning Office work together to develop between one and five deep-water locations (> 60 meters in depth) within state waters (up to 3 miles offshore) where wind energy technologies could be tested. Seven potential locations are being vetted for public reaction, one of which is offshore from Acadia National Park on the southern tip of Isle au Haut. Siting wind turbines at this location would significantly alter the visitor experience, changing the outstanding remote feeling to this section of Acadia National Park. Public meetings have been planned at the following locations and times:

Wednesday, Sept. 9th, 6:30 p.m., Ellsworth Holiday Inn

Tuesday, Sept. 15th, 6:30 p.m., Wiscasset Community Center

Wednesday, Sept. 16th, 6:30 p.m., Univ. of Maine at Machias, Performing Arts Center

Tuesday, Sept. 22nd, 6:30 p.m., Wells High School Auditorium

Tuesday, Sept. 29th, 6:30 p.m., Samoset Resort in Rockland

We encourage you to attend one of these meetings to express your concerns about a test location for deepwater wind energy turbines off the shores of Acadia National Park.

Why was Isle au Haut Chosen?

The waters surrounding the southern half of Isle au Haut were chosen as a potential test site for deepwater wind energy technologies because they were within the state's 3-mile jurisdiction, had deepwater (> 60 meters), had good wind resources (Category 6 or better as defined by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory), and were outside shipping channels and not above any known shipwrecks.



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What sorts of technology research would go on at the test location(s)?

Wind turbines have been tested in waters up to 60 meters in depth. This initiative is focused on expanding deepwater wind technology research. Research topics could include the design of floating wind turbine platforms, anchoring systems, and blades. Additionally, these sites may help companies and the state figure out energy delivery and distribution systems to the mainland.

What's the process after the public meetings?

Based on the comments gathered during the September public meetings, the state will revise the maps of suitable test locations, potentially reducing some in size or eliminating others. By mid-November, the state will publish its draft recommendations, open another 30-day public comment period, and then make a final decision by December 15th. The Maine legislature obligated the state to identify between one and five final test locations. More than one company, agency, or university may be allowed to apply for permits at each test location. The maximum experimental lease period is five years per application. The state has already had several inquiries, and anticipates much private interest since other states do not have deepwater resources, and the federal government is not ready yet to grant experimental leases on U.S. waters.

Why shouldn't offshore wind energy be located at this site?

Friends of Acadia does not oppose the development of offshore wind energy and recognizes that Maine could become a leader in this field. However, Isle au Haut is the most remote section of Acadia National Park, set aside for all Americans to enjoy a quiet visitor experience. Adding offshore wind turbines will significantly alter the visitor experience at Acadia National Park's Isle au Haut District by eliminating the ability to get away from the modern world and enjoy quiet nature in solitude.

Additionally, the legislation that mandated the establishment of deepwater offshore wind energy test locations (L.D. 1465) states that the Department of Conservation shall consider "**existing information regarding pertinent ecological, environmental, social and development-related factors, including, but not limited to... potential adverse effects... on a scenic resource of state or national significance, as defined by Title 35-A, section 3451, subsection 9**" [Section C-1 (1)]. National and state parks are considered scenic resources of state or national significance under this statute. Accordingly, the state should avoid the construction of experimental wind turbines and platforms near the Isle au Haut District of Acadia National Park in order to meet its own legislative requirements to not impact this significant scenery.

Action You Can Take:

1. Attend one of the state's public meetings in September to fully understand the scope of the state's proposal for offshore wind energy test locations and to oppose the waters off the southern tip of Isle au Haut as an appropriate test site.
2. If you are unable to attend one of these public meetings, you can share your thoughts in writing to Matt Nixon, State Planning Office, 38 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0038.

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Talking Points:

- Share your experiences on Isle au Haut. What about its remote nature drew you there? How would offshore wind turbines affect your experience of Acadia National Park?
- Share your feelings on Maine's positioning in the wind energy field – do you support Maine's desire to become a leader in fostering research and development in deepwater wind energy resources? Do you support the state's overall goal of finding appropriate locations for testing of deepwater wind energy technologies?
- Make the case that Isle au Haut is a national resource, worthy of protection by the National Park Service. Locating wind turbines offshore of the southern tip of Isle au Haut would affect the views from many of Acadia National Park's trails.
- Isle au Haut is the most remote section of Acadia National Park. Visitors come to this section of the park to enjoy bold granite cliffs, unique wildlife, dramatic ocean views, and remote island solitude. To add offshore wind turbines along the southern tip of Isle au Haut would create a dramatic modern intrusion into the peaceful, natural experience in this section of Acadia National Park.

For More Information: Visit the state's websites on the Ocean Energy Task Force (<http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/OETF/index.htm>) and Testing Ocean Energy in Maine (<http://www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/oceanenergy/oceanenergy.shtml>). You can also contact Friends of Acadia Conservation Director Stephanie Clement at 207-288-3340 or stephanie@friendsofacadia.org.

This Advocacy Alert was sent to citizens who have expressed interest in joining the Acadia Advocacy Network. If you would like to be removed from the Network, e-mail stephanie@friendsofacadia.org with the word, "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Thank you very much for your support of Friends of Acadia and for weighing in on issues of importance to Acadia National Park.