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### Stakeholder members float concerns of wind farm

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Stakeholders invited by Governor Carcieri to discuss the state's wind-farm project hold their second meeting.

The Providence Journal Bob Breidenbach

NARRAGANSETT — Will military-submarine traffic get in the way of the wind-turbine towers? Will lights on the turbines blind ship captains? Will wind turbines suck away the energy from the wind, leaving sailboats stranded?

These are some of the questions and concerns that arose yesterday at a meeting of Governor Carcieri's offshore wind-power stakeholders' group.

But few answers were offered at the meeting, held at the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus. The group is charged with identifying which of 11 potential sites would be best to place a wind energy project, known as RI Winds.

Still, the governor's chief energy adviser wants the group to pick a site for a wind farm by the middle of next month.

Governor Carcieri has proposed building a state-owned wind farm on the scale of the proposed Cape Wind project that would be large enough to generate 15 percent of the state's electricity. Depending on where it is situated, it could cost \$900 million to \$1.9 billion to build.

The stakeholder group comprises about 35 representatives of various municipalities, agencies and

organizations. They were invited to participate by the governor office.

Paul Gromer, president of Peregrine Energy Group of Boston, led the meeting, asking members to come up with a comprehensive list of issues that the group should consider in making its recommendation.

Roy F. Bonner, of Little Compton, said that in order to properly evaluate the potential sites, the group should be presented with more engineering details of each proposed site. “In order to look at this intelligently, what does the design look like?”

He suggested that any cost estimate should be doubled and then a 20-percent contingency factor added in.

One member said there was a lot of submarine traffic headed to Groton, Conn., for repairs, near the southwest ledge off the coast of Rhode Island, and that should be taken into consideration.

A representative of the Northeast Pilots Association asked what the lighting on the wind turbines would look like at sea, and whether the light pollution might blind ship captains.

A couple of members suggested that neighboring states — specifically Connecticut and Massachusetts — be brought into discussions, since some of the proposed sites are near those states. Andrew Dzykewicz, chief energy adviser to the governor, first joked that perhaps “there is a senator from Hyannis who would come in and support” Rhode Island’s project. It was an allusion to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who has been a staunch opponent of the proposed Cape Wind project for Nantucket Sound.

Dzykewicz then said he didn’t think it was a good idea to seek participation from bordering states. “This is a Rhode Island project for Rhode Islanders. What this is about is what does Rhode Island want to do.”

Joseph DePasquale, representing the Town of Warren, concurred. “I would hate to have us invite other states who can’t vote and completely derail” the process, he said.

One group member asked whether a wind farm might literally take the wind out of the sails of nearby sailboats by using up the wind energy.

DePasquale wondered who would own the advertising space on the wind turbines. Perhaps a large company, such as Coca-Cola, might pay \$1 million to have its logo on the structures. Someone responded that the structures would be too small for ads. Another group member suggested in that case, the project could be called “Trump Wind,” a reference to financier Donald Trump.

Robin Schutt, representing the Town of South Kingstown, suggested that the group should hold public hearings in order to find out from the public which sites they think would be best.

Dzykewicz discouraged that idea. “This is not a permitting process,” he said. Once a site is chosen, the public will have its say at that time, when public hearings will be held.

“What we don’t want to do is start a permitting process with eight locations.”

Dennis Duffy, an attorney for Cape Wind Associates, attended the meeting as an observer, he said. Asked whether Cape Wind sees the Rhode Island project as being a potential competitor, he said no, and that the opposite was true: it could benefit Cape Wind.

He said that Cape Wind would be interested in sharing certain land-based startup costs, such as an operations center, perhaps at Quonset Point, where both projects could be launched from.

What advice would Duffy offer to the Rhode Island wind-project stakeholders?

“Go as broad as you can with the group, hear every opinion,” he said. “But then you have to make a decision.”

After compiling the list of questions, Gromer, the meeting’s leader, said that the state’s consultant, Applied Technology Management, would work over the next few weeks to answer the questions from the meeting. He said that company had already done a lot of research into the issues and may already have answers.

The next meeting will be scheduled for next month. Dzykewicz, the governor’s energy adviser, hopes that the group will come to a consensus then and recommend a site.

Next would be the permitting process, which would involve public hearings and regulatory approvals from state agencies. If the project is in federal waters, it would require federal approvals as well.

Carcieri has set a goal of getting the project online by 2010, the last year of his term. But some have questioned whether a project of this scope could actually be permitted and built by that time.

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