

Understanding Perceptions of Policy Makers Regarding Offshore Wind Power Development

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Abstract

Offshore Wind Power is well established in Europe with more than 500 MW of nameplate capacity operational, and much more in advanced planning and construction phase. The offshore wind power made its debut in US with a proposal by Cape Wind Associates to construct a 420 MW project at Nantucket Sound. This unanticipated development was supported by some and strong opposed by many local residents. In due course, policy makers in a number of states reacted to the threat of an offshore wind farm development close to their shores. Some states like New Jersey imposed a moratorium on the development, while other states like New York supported the construction of an offshore wind power facility. More recently, the state of Texas leased out more than 11,000 acres of submerged to a private corporation for the development of a 150 MW offshore wind power project. On other hand many states like Delaware have not taken any action on the issue. Such developments indicate the unique ways in which the policy makers in different states have reacted to the development of offshore wind power projects within their costal jurisdictions.



The primary focus of this research is to understand the motivations for the actions of policy makers in different states related to the development of offshore wind power in their coastal waters. Further, the research will also try to discover and assess the strength of various institutional stakeholders influencing the policy makers and thereby impacting the policy development related to offshore wind power development in the state. It is hoped that such a research will enhance the debate on this novel energy medium resulting into policy formulation that balances the economic demands with environmental and social benefits. The project will use 'situated choice model' as the theoretical framework to understand the perceptions of the policy makers. Semi structured interviews will be conducted to collect data and grounded theory will be utilized to analyze the data.