



The Watch

Capt. Dave Monti, Chairman



The RISAA Legislative Committee’s mission is to provide, in partnership with the Affiliated Clubs, a forum for improving the knowledge and understanding of fishery-related and government issues that affect recreational anglers. An informed membership encourages involvement and advocacy. The Legislative Committee will strive to advocate responsible fishery decision.

The Committee is comprised of RISAA Members and delegates from the Affiliated Clubs. The Committee meets two or three times a year, depending on the number of fishery and/or legislative issues that develop.

Ocean Farms In The Wind

Ocean farms in the wind

The States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts announced on May 23 that they will be going into contract negotiations for 1200 megawatts (MW) of ocean wind farm power generation. The Block Island Wind Farm pilot project, the first ocean wind farm in the nation, with five turbines is 30 MW. So by comparison these projects are a lot larger.

The State of Rhode Island will enter contract negotiations with Deepwater Wind to procure 400 MW of power, and Massachusetts will enter contract negotiations with Vineyard Wind to procure 800 MW of energy. Both projects will be located in areas where the firms have already been granted leases off Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

In December of 2017, over 50 scientists presented their research findings about the Block Island Wind Farm (BIW) at the Southern New England Offshore Wind Energy Science Forum held at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography in Narragansett, RI. The BIW was viewed as having no remarkable adverse effects on the environment, fish, mammals, birds and people.

However, fishermen in Rhode Island and Massachusetts have expressed concerns about where actual turbines will be placed as they will impact fishing activity. Most fishermen have expressed support for wind farms when planned properly. Recreational anglers say they create structure, habitat, and food for sea life that attracts fish. They attract fish much the same way that oil drilling platforms have attracted fish in the Gulf of Mexico.

Shortly after the State of RI announced plans, a conference call with recreational and commercial fishing industry leaders took place. State of Rhode Island officials outlined the project stressing that it is in the planning phase and that the State plans to move forward with fishermen input every step of the way on the project. State agencies on the call included

commissioners and directors from the Office of Energy Resources, the Coastal Resource Management Council and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

Governor Raimondo and state officials were praised on the conference call for bringing ocean wind energy to Rhode Island in a big way. By collaborating regionally on efforts to lower

electricity costs, increase reliability, improve fuel security, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Massachusetts and Rhode Island are working to bring clean, local offshore wind to New England’s electric grid.

In March 2017, Governor Raimondo set a goal for Rhode Island to increase its clean energy resources portfolio the-fold by 2020 to reach a total of 1,000 megawatts. Last month’s announcement represents a significant step toward



The five turbine 30 megawatt Block Island Wind Farm has become a fishing destination. Massachusetts and Rhode Island announced plans last month to build wind farms that generate 1200 megawatts

achieving that goal.

More to come on ocean wind farms as these projects are developed and planned with fishermen input.

Commercial and for-hire licensing regulations addressed at workshop

The RI DEM reviewed proposed commercial and for-hire licensing regulation changes at a May 23, 2018 workshop held at the URI Bay Campus. Items on the agenda included a number of commercial fishing licensing language changes designed to make regulations more succinct.

Additionally, of particular interest to recreational anglers, was a review of the Rhode Island’s recreational coastal shark permit regulations and a proposal that would make electronic reporting mandatory for party and charter vessels in Rhode Island.

John Lake, principal biologist at DEM said, “Many Rhode Island party and charter boats are already doing electronic trip reports. **(to page 36)**