

Bids are in for offshore wind energy

State request for proposals draws 18 plans

BY MARK HARRINGTON
mark.harrington@newsday.com

Plans to begin displacing power from some of Long Island's largest fossil-fuel plants moved a step closer to reality this week as four developers submitted 18 separate bids for a state request for proposals for offshore wind energy.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which is administering the bidding process, received bids for up to 1,200 megawatts of wind energy from arrays as near as 14 miles from Long Island to as far away as 85 miles. Bids were due on Valentine's Day and the winning ones could be announced in the spring, NYSERDA said. A megawatt of offshore wind energy can power more than 360 homes.

LIPA previously has awarded two contracts for up to 130 megawatts of wind power from an array off the Rhode Island coast operated by Danish energy

conglomerate, Orsted, and its new Connecticut-based partner, Eversource. LIPA officials have also said that the Long Island grid could use up to 400 megawatts of additional offshore wind to meet aggressive state goals for green energy by 2030.

The state has sought 800 megawatts of wind-energy but allowed that the bids could be higher or lower. Another bid request by the state is expected next year and much more in the future as New York seeks up to 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2035.

Among new proposals for the state bid is a project called Liberty Wind by Vineyard Wind and Anbaric Development Partners that would be located about 85 miles from the nearest New York shore, a spokeswoman said. The project can be 400 megawatts, 800 megawatts or up to 1,200 megawatts. Liberty Wind would make the components for the project in the Albany area and ship them down the Hudson River and eventually to a site off the Massachusetts coast in the Atlantic. Vineyard Wind is owned by Denmark-based Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners and Avangrid Renewables of Portland, Oregon.



Winning bids for additional wind turbines, such as these that stand off Block Island, Rhode Island, could be announced by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority in the spring.

Anbaric is 40 percent owned by the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan.

All the plans would require hundreds of turbines over 400 feet tall with undersea cables to the mainland in areas some commercial fishermen say would limit access to fishing grounds. The developers, and New York State, have vowed to work with the fishermen to minimize impacts.

Equinor Wind US, formerly Statoil, the Norwegian energy conglomerate, is proposing a project called Empire Wind 14 to 35 miles off Long Island. The company's release offered few specific details about the

project, saying only that its 80,000-acre lease in the waters off New York has the capacity for up to 2,000 megawatts of wind energy.

In a statement, Equinor said New York's "strong maritime workforce and port infrastructure assets will also play an important role in the growth of the industry," adding its Empire Wind project will generate about \$1 billion in savings from reduced wholesale energy costs in New York.

Orsted, which last year acquired Deepwater Wind, is teaming up with Connecticut-based energy giant Eversource to offer a project called Sunrise Wind

that will be located in the waters off Massachusetts/Rhode Island, more than 30 miles from Montauk Point.

Also, in the mix is the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project, a joint venture of EDF Renewables North America and Shell New Energies US in a federal wind-energy area off New Jersey.

Another bidder, Mayflower Wind Energy, which had earlier indicated an interest in the New York request, did not submit a bid, according to information provided by NYSERDA.

A NYSERDA spokeswoman called the response to the bids "historic."

Smithtown residents turn out in favor of group home

BY NICHOLAS SPANGLER
nicholas.spangler@newsday.com

Dozens of Smithtown residents spoke in favor of a proposed St. James group home for six adults with developmental disabilities and autism at a town meeting Thursday night.

Town officials have no approval authority over the home, which would operate under New York State oversight, and there was no town council vote on it. Still, the hearing at the town senior center brought out staff of Life's WORC — the Garden City not-for-profit that would operate the home — as well as many parents of children with autism

and sympathetic neighbors.

"If these were people of a different religion or race, we wouldn't be having this hearing tonight, and it should be no different for people with disabilities," said Joseph Winters, whose 24-year-old son, Sean, has autism and would be one of the home's residents. The younger Winters is a lifelong St. James resident. "We all deserve to live in a nice home, and people with autism do too," his father said.

Winters is part-owner of Winters Bros., a major regional waste management company. The family has lived in St. James for three generations.

Life's WORC plans to move

this summer into a single-family, two-story Colonial-style home on a .56-acre Twixt Hills Road lot. The group plans to renovate the home, which it bought for \$575,000 Jan. 9, but the home footprint will not change, Mary Rafferty, Life's WORC's chief operating officer, said in an interview.

Rafferty said neighbors would likely notice little change beyond construction of a backyard fence whose style was chosen to match the one next door. Unmarked minivans will park in the driveway and drive residents to community destinations but will not beep when they reverse, she said. The home will be staffed 24

hours a day. Rafferty declined to give staffing ratios, citing residents' privacy.

Previous hearings in Smithtown about group homes for people with disabilities were far more contentious, with neighbors worried over home values and quality-of-life issues.

No one spoke in opposition to the home Thursday night, though a clerk read into the record an email from the Damin Park Civic Association warning that the home could "permanently alter the nature and character of the neighborhood," introducing traffic and staffers who would be strangers to an area they said

had changed little over the past 50 years. Those concerns, the authors said, were "in no way a reflection on those with either a physical or mental disability."

Twixt Hills Road resident Tom Gulotta said he and his neighbors "welcome this, we just wanted information up front."

Mary Lu Heinz of Nesconset has a 21-year-old son with autism. Displaying her son's high school graduation photograph, she noted that she and her husband, nearing retirement age, worry that in coming years their son will not have a place to call home. "We're contemplating our son's life when we're gone," she said. "Where will he go?"