

EDITORIAL

Communities have a role in wind power

There are lessons to learn from the recent dust-up between lawmakers and the developers of a planned wind farm some 30 miles off Montauk — lessons that will become increasingly important as Long Island gets ready to play a major part in the state's wise expansion of wind energy.

Assemb. Fred Thiele (I-Sag Harbor), a staunch advocate of offshore wind power, has long supported the project. He's helped it move forward despite opposition from key constituencies in East Hampton Town and especially in Wainscott, where the cable carrying the electricity would come ashore. But when developer Deepwater Wind was bought by Danish giant Orsted, and the project morphed from 90 megawatts to 130 megawatts thanks to new technology that makes the same number of turbines more efficient, Thiele said he heard nothing from either company. Nor did they agree to meet with him, as he requested. That's not being a good, or wise, corporate citizen.

The leaders of the new company since have apologized. They promise to keep lawmakers informed and say they want to work with them as they compete with other firms that responded to New York State's solicitation of proposals for 800 megawatts of offshore-wind power. Awards are due in the spring. The response was promising.

Four developers submitted 18 pitches. That's good. The proposed arrays, which ranged up to 1,200 megawatts, would be sited as close as 14 miles off Long Island and as far as 85 miles, from the New York Bight at the Island's western end to off-coastal Massachusetts off the East End. While details of most of the proposals have not yet been released publicly, most if not all plan to bring their power onshore on Long Island to be plugged into different points on the region's grid.

And this round is just the beginning. Wind power is hugely important for Long Island, and the entire state, as we try to wean ourselves off fossil fuels as our main source of power. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's goal is to have 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind capacity by 2035. Legislation being considered by state lawmakers would call for a complete transition to renewable energy by 2050. Most of the wind power needed to make that work will be located off Long Island's coast. The potential for jobs and associated businesses is huge. That doesn't mean that important questions shouldn't be asked about projects or that assertions from both sides shouldn't be tested, but the process should be as open and honest as possible — in both directions.

Wind developers should keep local officials informed, build community support at the beginning of the process, listen to concerns, respond to ones that are reasonable and explain why others are not justified. This is true not only for East Hampton Town, but also for all of Long Island, because it's clear that much of this new power will come ashore somewhere other than the South Fork. Thiele says Long Island should be viewed as a community, not a commodity, by offshore wind companies. That's a reasonable standard.

The turbines aren't the only things out in the ocean. So is our energy future.

— *The editorial board*



Wind turbines generate electricity off of Block Island, Rhode Island.

MATT DAVIES



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LETTERS

Trouble with multi-party nominees

The Constitution states that "the people of the several states" shall choose who represents them in Washington, not political party leaders. So if the New York State Democratic Party is really concerned about corruption, as State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island) is quoted as saying, it should repeal the Wilson Pakula Act of 1947, which forbids a candidate from receiving the nomination of a political party if he or she is not a registered member of that party, unless the candidate gets permission from party officials.

Repealing the Wilson Pakula Act for an "open primary system" would allow a candidate for office to appear on any party's line, regardless of the candidate's registration, as long as he or she collects enough signatures from mem-

bers of that specific party. This would give "the people" real choices.

*Jack Coughlin,
Deer Park*

Editor's note: The writer is a member of the Suffolk County Conservative Party executive committee.

As a poll worker, I favor limiting a candidate to one line per ballot.

Many voters think they need to fill every circle where their candidate's name appears, thus invalidating the ballot. When I tell them they can vote for a candidate for an elected office on only one line, the response is inevitably, "But I only voted for one person."

Limiting the places where a candidate's name appears would alleviate this situation.

*Jeff Cohen,
Flushing*

Post public-agency records online

Why won't the Massapequa Water District publish all of its documents and information about the district online instead of hiding behind the Freedom of Information Law ["Effort to stop 'abusive' use of law," News, Feb. 19]?

For that matter, why is it not a state law that all public entities publish all of their information online? This information belongs to the people, not the employees who work for us.

*Jerry Romano,
Sea Cliff*

Encouraged by battery progress

"Aiming to power up" [Business, Feb. 27] was an inspiring story about a home-grown innovative battery startup. StorEn Technologies in Stony Brook is pioneering