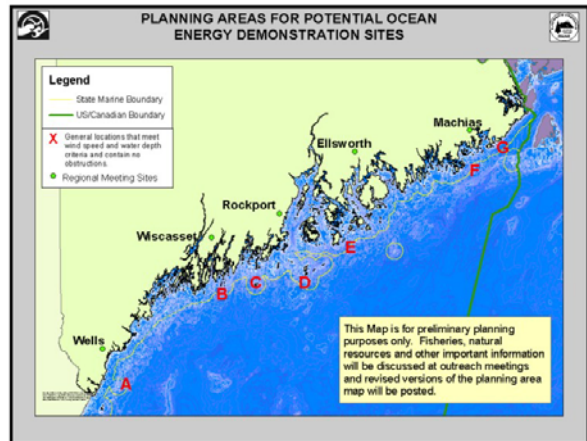


State Considers Ocean Energy Testing Areas in Maine Waters

In June 2009, the Maine legislature passed legislation (L.D. 1465) which tasks the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC), in consultation with the Maine State Planning Office, to select up to five locations within Maine state waters to be designated as "Ocean Energy Testing Areas."

Criteria for site selection of the testing areas include wind speed greater than 17 miles per hour on an annual average; ocean depths greater than 200 feet of water; minimal conflicts with marine obstructions, dredge dumps, officially recognized shipping channels, unexploded ordnances; and proximity to existing undersea cables or areas that have historically been pre-permitted for an undersea cable by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.



According to the DOC, through a combination of anthropogenic, environmental, and geophysical analyses, the state hopes to site these ocean energy testing and demonstration projects in areas with the fewest number of conflicts. The DOC will officially designate these areas on Dec. 15, 2009.

Sites meeting the above criteria are shown on the map. Blue Hill Bay does not have any of the site criteria and is therefore not considered a potential testing site. The site nearest to Blue Hill Bay is off Isle Au Haut. It is unclear how wind turbines will impact the marine environment and its users. Some possible conflicts include loss of scenic view; harmful impacts on birds, bats, fish, and marine mammals; and physical obstacles to navigation and commercial fisheries. The most obvious benefits to wind power include reducing dependency on foreign oil and creating alternative potentially less damaging sources of electricity.