For Immediate Release
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DEEP Announces Selection of 804 MW of Offshore Wind Power from Park City Wind Project

Vineyard Wind to enter contract negotiations with state’s utilities; Contract subject to PURA approval

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes announced today that a bid from developer Vineyard Wind has been selected to advance to contract negotiations with the state’s electric distribution companies to provide 804 megawatts (MW) of offshore wind through the development of the Park City Wind Project. The bid was selected through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) that DEEP conducted pursuant to Public Act 19-71, An Act Concerning the Procurement of Energy Derived from Offshore Wind, signed by Governor Ned Lamont on June 7, 2019 after receiving overwhelming bipartisan support in the Connecticut General Assembly. The resulting contracts will be subject to review and approval by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA).

The selection of this project, which will provide the equivalent of 14% of the state’s electricity supply, represents the largest purchase of renewable energy in Connecticut’s history. It will more than double the amount of new zero-carbon renewable energy procured by DEEP to date. It also represents a major step toward Governor Lamont’s goal of a 100% zero-carbon electricity supply by 2040. The Park City Wind project is offered at a price lower than any other publicly announced offshore wind project in North America. When it comes online in 2025, the project will enable Connecticut to avoid emitting more than 25 million short tons of carbon dioxide while improving electric grid reliability in cold winter periods, a critical feature that will speed Connecticut’s transition away from reliance on natural gas power plants.

The project also includes an estimated $890 million in direct economic development in Connecticut, including Bridgeport Harbor and the local supply chain. The project includes a commitment to pay no less than the prevailing wage and to negotiate in good faith for a mutually agreeable project labor agreement. Vineyard Wind estimates 2,800 direct full-time employment years will be created in Connecticut through the project.

“Connecticut is diversifying its offshore wind portfolio with this latest procurement selection, which sets up Connecticut as a regional leader in the creation of a thriving industry that will bring tangible benefits for our state and the entire region,” said Governor Ned Lamont.

“The climate crisis is no longer a future problem, and the time for action is now,” Commissioner Dykes said. “The selection of this project—the largest renewable purchase in Connecticut history—demonstrates that a zero-carbon electric future is attainable in a relatively short period of time. By leveraging
competition, DEEP is securing the best value for ratepayers as we advance climate solutions and grow clean energy jobs here in our state.”

“Vineyard Wind is proud that our Park City Wind proposal was selected in this competitive process and we are excited to work with Governor Lamont and DEEP to deliver jobs and economic development opportunities to the Bridgeport region and meaningful reductions in harmful carbon emissions,” said Lars Pedersen, CEO of Vineyard Wind. “Today’s announcement takes Connecticut one step closer to being the epicenter of the new offshore wind industry, with thriving ports in both Bridgeport and New London. We look forward to building on the work already underway with a network of project partners, local officials, the maritime community, other developers, and all stakeholders involved to make Connecticut a hub for the offshore wind industry in the United States for decades to come.”

This is the state’s third procurement with offshore wind as a competitive resource, and the first procurement specifically focused on offshore wind. In 2018, DEEP selected a total of 304 megawatts of offshore wind from Revolution Wind developed by Ørsted and Eversource. Revolution Wind includes economic development commitments to the state pier in New London. With this most recent selection, Connecticut is leading New York (5%) and Massachusetts (13%), with the equivalent of 19% of its electric load under contract with offshore wind projects. Rhode Island currently has the equivalent of 25% of its electric load committed.

In June 2019, DEEP initiated a proceeding to release a request for proposals (RFP) within days of the bipartisan enactment of Public Act 19-71, which authorized DEEP to procure up to 2,000 megawatts of offshore wind power. As provided in the Act, DEEP consulted with the Office of Consumer Counsel, Attorney General’s Office, procurement manager at PURA, and Connecticut’s electric distribution companies, Eversource and United Illuminating. The final RFP was issued on August 16, 2019. On October 30, 2019, DEEP received more than 30 bid variants from three different developers in response to the RFP. Vineyard Wind’s Park City Wind project was selected from those bids. DEEP completed its procurement process in record time, to capture lower pricing as a result of federal tax incentives set to expire in 2019.

As part of the RFP process, DEEP convened a Commission on Environmental Standards to provide input on best practices for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating any impacts to wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems and water-dependent uses like commercial fishing. Many of the Commission’s recommendations were incorporated into the RFP. The Park City Wind project scored the best among its competitors in its design and plans to address environmental and fisheries impacts. The project includes a thorough assessment of potential hazards to wildlife and fisheries from developing and operating the offshore wind turbines and mitigate if necessary. The environmental and fisheries mitigation plan also provides for a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, a commitment to 1-nautical-mile-by-1-nautical-mile spacing between turbines, vigorous environmental monitoring throughout all project phases, and a thoughtful decommissioning plan. The project will undergo environmental review through a number of permitting processes.

“DEEP is appreciative of the constructive and extensive input we received from the Commission and the many stakeholders who participated in this process,” DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes said. “The recommendations provided by the Commission and all the input we received enhanced our ability to evaluate the bids and ensure the state’s investment in offshore wind is compatible with our climate, environment and energy policy.”

As prescribed in Public Act 19-71, economic development benefits were considered as a component of the bid evaluation, in consultation with Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The Park City Wind project will invest in the redevelopment of port facilities in
Bridgeport Harbor to facilitate local outfitting and assembly of the turbines foundations and an operations and maintenance base needed to deploy the 804 MW project. The project will also establish America’s first Tier 1 offshore wind supplier in Connecticut through the Kerite cable manufacturing facility in Seymour. These investments in the local supply chain are expected to bring an estimated $890 million in economic development benefits directly related to the Park City Wind proposal, and are expected to attract additional economic development benefits as regional offshore wind purchases continue in the future.

“This significant procurement firmly places Connecticut as a leader in clean energy,” said DECD Commissioner David Lehman. “Vineyard Wind’s investment will help develop our supply chain and create good, high paying jobs. Today marks an important step in advancing renewable energy as an economic driver for Connecticut.”

The Park City Wind project will now enter into contract negotiations with the state’s two electric utilities, The United Illuminating Company and Eversource Energy, for a contract with a 20-year term.

For more information, contact:
Kristina Rozek
kristina.rozek@ct.gov
(860) 424-3110