

Delaware Opinion on Offshore Wind Power

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Executive Summary

- A probability sample of Delaware residents, over-sampled in coastal areas, was asked for opinions regarding offshore wind power. Of 1839 valid mailings to Delaware addresses in September and October 2006, 955 were returned, a response rate of 51.9%.
- Approximately 50 percent of Delaware residents believe that offshore wind power development should be encouraged and promoted (55% in the ocean or 47% in Delaware Bay), with more than another 35 percent (37% in the ocean or 39% in Delaware Bay) saying that it should be allowed in appropriate circumstances. Less than 1 percent indicate that offshore wind power development should be prohibited in all circumstances.
- More prefer wind turbine development in the ocean (32 percent) than in Delaware Bay (16 percent); a majority express no preference.
- Given an example of a 130 turbine wind farm, 6 miles from the coast is statewide support is 77.8% while opposition is only 4.2 percent. Among those who live near the ocean (average approximately 0.6 miles away), supporters command 65 percent compared to 19.5 percent for opponents. These responses are based on a question asked in our prior survey on Cape Cod, yet here it yields strikingly higher support.
- There was a small expressed intention to not visit beaches with visible turbines. However, a much larger percent expressed a desire to visit a beach previously not visited, for the purpose of seeing turbines.
- Respondents voted whether they would prefer new power to come from coal or natural gas with no price increase, or from a new wind farm with prices initially higher by \$1 - \$30 per month. More than 90% voted for the offshore wind. Fewer than ten percent voted for expanding coal or natural gas despite the question's assertion that these sources would keep utility bills lower.
- Assuming Delaware would generate royalties from a wind power project (as it would be in public waters), residents were asked how the money should be used among the State General Fund, the Green Energy Fund or a hypothetical Beach Nourishment Fund. A plurality of Delaware residents preferred the Green Energy Fund. However, residents who live within an average of 0.6 miles from the Ocean would prefer the Beach Nourishment Fund.

For the complete report, see <http://www.ocean.udel.edu/windpower/>; For further information, contact Jeremy Firestone, jf@udel.edu, 302 831-022