

Offshore wind developers to invest \$4.5M in Rhode Island

22 April 2019, by Jennifer Mcdermott

The developers of a new offshore wind farm said Monday that they're investing \$4.5 million in Rhode Island to advance the industry in the state.

Democratic Gov. Gina Raimondo said it was fitting that the funding from Danish-based Orsted U.S. Offshore Wind and Eversource was announced during a statehouse event on Earth Day, to cement Rhode Island's position as a leader in offshore wind.

The University of Rhode Island will receive \$3 million for offshore wind education and research. The Rhode Island Commerce Corp. and the state's labor department will use \$1.5 million to train people for jobs in the field and support related businesses. Raimondo said she wants to ensure that Rhode Island residents have the skills to get jobs that are being created in the high-growth industry.

Orsted Co-CEO Jeff Grybowski said the company recognizes that it can only succeed if it invests in the people and local businesses that will support the development of offshore wind farms.

"Rhode Island is taking such a leadership position and bringing us into a clean energy future," he said.

Orsted is acquiring permits to build up to 50 turbines in federal waters south of Martha's Vineyard. Orsted and Eversource are co-owners of the 400-megawatt wind farm, called Revolution Wind. The \$4.5 million investment is contingent on the permits being approved.

Local construction could start in Rhode Island in 2020 with commercial operations by 2023. The turbines are expected to generate enough energy to power about 270,000 homes, or about a quarter of the homes in Rhode Island.

Orsted is planning several more U.S. wind farms.

URI President David Dooley said he thinks the offshore wind programs at the university will attract more students who want to work on global challenges, such as climate change, by going into the renewable energy field. The \$3 million will help pay for curriculum development, research and internship opportunities, he added.

The first U.S. offshore wind farm was built off Block Island, Rhode Island, and began operating in late 2016. That five-turbine project was originally developed by Providence-based Deepwater Wind, which was acquired by Orsted last year. Orsted entered the U.S. market in 2015.

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