

## SMITH-WHELAN BILL TO PERMIT BPU TO APPROVE QUALIFIED WIND ENERGY PROJECTS CLEARS SENATE

**TRENTON** – Legislation sponsored by Senate Environment and Energy Committee Chair Bob Smith and Senator Jim Whelan that would permit the Board of Public Utilities to approve qualified wind energy projects located in State waters offshore Atlantic City and would require the BPU to provide a 30-day period for submission of applications cleared the Senate today.

“If we are to create a sustainable future for the coming generations of New Jerseyans, we need to increase our efforts to rely less on fossil fuels and more on renewable energy sources,” said Senator Smith (D-Middlesex, Somerset). “As a coastal state with significant potential, offshore wind energy must be a part of our plan and Atlantic City’s coast is a great place to start. This bill will enable such projects to progress.”

In 2010, the Legislature passed a major law providing incentives to construct offshore wind energy facilities. One element of that law was a small pilot project in State waters off of Atlantic City in order to gain experience before moving forward with larger projects in federal waters. This bill, S-988, is intended to recognize the intent of the legislature in 2010 to expedite New Jersey’s entry into the offshore wind energy arena.

“Catching up with the world in the development of wind energy farms is long overdue, especially for New Jersey as a coastal state. The environment, the economy and future generations will only benefit if we make the right decisions today,” said Senator Whelan (D-Atlantic). “Ensuring that the BPU acts cooperatively to approve qualified wind energy projects off the coast of Atlantic City, and is not counterproductive to realizing our potential in offshore wind production, is essential to New Jersey’s progress.”

Senator Whelan refers to the BPU’s repeated rejection of the Fishermen’s Energy project that proposed a five-turbine wind farm off the coast of Atlantic City in compliance with the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act (OWEDA). Fishermen’s Energy met all permitting requirements and even received a federal grant to begin its project, but the BPU consistently turned down the application for an offshore wind renewable energy certificate (OREC) claiming that project would not meet the cost-benefit test of the 2010 legislation.

The bill cleared the Senate with a vote of 23-11. It now heads to the Assembly for consideration