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OCTOBER 22, 2010

## UM study sees promise, pitfalls of offshore wind



Building commercial wind turbines off Maryland's Atlantic coast could well produce enough electricity to meet the state's goals for generating renewable energy - but significant hurdles must be overcome to realize that potential, a new study says.

So says a new study by the University of Maryland's [Center for Integrative Environmental Research](#).

"Offshore wind is not a slam dunk for Maryland, but the potential remains very strong," says Matthias Ruth, the study's principal investigator and director of the UM center. "It's economically feasible and environmentally advantageous, but will require some tough trade-offs, compromise and collaboration between public and private sectors."

Offshore turbines are increasingly common in Europe and elsewhere, but have yet to be built in the United States. Various economic, political and technical issues must be resolved the study says.

The recent pullback by Constellation Energy from seeking to build a third nuclear reactor at Calvert Cliffs may boost the momentum for offshore wind, the report says.

Also helping was the recent announcement by a Google-led investment group of its plans to underwrite development of an offshore wind transmission grid along the East Coast. Maryland has joined with neighboring Mid-Atlantic states in seeking to coordinate its wind development.

Getting electricity from wind turbines off Maryland appears to be much less costly if the transmission lines come ashore on the Delaware coast - an estimated \$20 million at Bethany Beach versus \$200 million near

### About the bloggers



**Meredith Cohn** has been a reporter for more than 18 years and has covered a variety of subjects, from airlines and agriculture to politics and health and fitness. She's gained an appreciation for the environment as a biker, runner and dog walker. She also hopes this blog means coworkers will stop staring when she carries home recyclables from the office.



**Tim Wheeler** reports on the environment and Chesapeake Bay. A native of West Virginia, he has focused mainly on Maryland's environment since moving here in 1983. Along the way, he's crewed aboard a skipjack in the bay, canoed under city streets up the Jones Fall from the Inner Harbor, and gone deep underground in a western Maryland coal mine. He loves seafood, rambles in the country and good stories. He hopes to share some here.

Contributor **Christy Zuccarini** has been [blogging about the local DIY craft scene](#) for a year for Baltimoresun.com. She brings her perspective on all things handmade to B'More Green, where she will highlight projects you can do yourself as well as crafters who are integrating sustainable methods and materials.

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Ocean City, the report says.

There's also potential for turbines off Maryland's coast to interfere with radar operations at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, and with radar on military ships and planes in the area, the report notes.

To read the full report, go [here](#).

*(Thanet offshore wind project southeast coast of England. Photo via AFP/Getty, supplied by Vattenfall, Swedish state-owned utility operating the turbines.)*

Posted by **Tim Wheeler** at 6:00 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)



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#### Comments

It seems a common disagreement I have seen besides logistic is with people themselves not wanting them off the coast messing with the view. Europe doesn't seem to have this problem. Does Maryland have the same renewable portfolio standards as many other states at 20% by 2020?

TW: Yes

Posted by: **Energy monitor** | **October 22, 2010 8:20 AM**

Wind has better reliability than the current solar technology, but it is not constant. We still have to build conventional plants to maximum capacity for when the wind does not meet our needs. Starting and stopping these plants will be terribly inefficient.

Europe uses a lot less electricity per person that we do in the US, so the comparisons are not apples to apples.

New infrared "solar" cells are just around the corner. They will work in the dark. What we need is personal control of energy and an end to being held hostage by energy companies.

Posted by: **JHC** | **October 26, 2010 11:00 PM**

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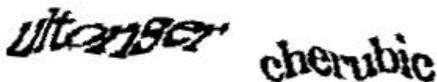
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