

6. CLEAN ENERGY:

DOE funds new push to coordinate states' support for wind energy

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The Department of Energy this week launched another effort to accelerate wind energy development in the United States.

The agency **announced** the creation of six Wind Energy Regional Resource Centers, aimed at providing up-to-date information to help tackle the financial, regulatory and industry-related challenges facing wind energy development at the regional level.

The resource centers will be operated by various renewable energy advocacy groups, including the Utah Clean Energy Alliance, the Renewable Energy Alaska Project, the Minnesota-based Windustry and the Vermont-based Clean Energy Group.

DOE has provided \$1.2 million in funding for the centers.

Onshore wind continues to grow in capacity across the United States and now accounts for 4.1 percent of the nation's electricity generation, according to a recent report by the American Wind Energy Association ([ClimateWire](#), March 11).

But the United States still lags behind other nations in offshore wind development, with no utility-scale farms yet constructed, while Europe's capacity is now close to 10 gigawatts.

At an offshore wind energy conference held last month in Boston, Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman called offshore wind "the next frontier."

"We have to acknowledge first that the onshore wind story has been a phenomenal success, and second that we therefore have to turn the same level of intensity and focus to the offshore problem," Poneman said.

Potential offshore growth in Southeast

According to Clean Energy Group President Lewis Milford, much of the Northeast resource center's efforts will be directed toward streamlining the now-disparate policies and practices among states as the offshore wind industry gets its start in the region.

"The key to success in this industry is going to be collaboration among states," Milford said. "No single state can do it alone."

Brian O'Hara, president of the Southeastern Coastal Wind Coalition, said that although there are relatively few utility-scale wind projects in his region, he sees "a lot of potential" for growth as onshore wind technology advances.

O'Hara also championed the Southeast's offshore wind potential, saying the shorelines of Virginia through Florida contain more than 60 percent of the East Coast's shallow-water offshore wind resources.

The Southeast resource center's main focus would be on engaging stakeholders and outreach, O'Hara said, which is "really important for an industry like wind, especially in a region like the Southeast where there isn't a lot of firsthand experience with the technology."

The six Wind Energy Regional Resource Centers:

- Northeast Wind Resource Center, operated by the Clean Energy Group and Sustainable Energy Advantage, based in Montpelier, Vt.
- America's Islanded Grids Resource Center, operated by the Renewable Energy Alaska Project and the Island Institute, based in Anchorage, Alaska.
- Northwest Wind Resource and Action Center, operated by the Renewable Northwest Project, based in Portland, Ore.
- Southeast Regional Resource Center for Wind Energy, operated by the Southeastern Coastal Wind Coalition, based in Raleigh, N.C.
- Four Corners Wind Resource Center, operated by the Utah Clean Energy Alliance, based in Salt Lake City.
- Midwest and Prairie Regional Wind Resource Center, operated by Windustry, based in Minneapolis.