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The Great Lakes May Soon be Home to Offshore Wind

by [Graham Jesmer, Staff Writer](#)

The waters of the Great Lakes, near the shores of Canada, may soon be home to offshore wind power. The Province of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources has lifted a deferral on applications to produce offshore wind power in the province's waters. This decision came after the province took steps over the past year to obtain the best available information on which to base decisions regarding offshore projects on. These steps have included partnering with the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to evaluate offshore wind potential in the Great Lakes, analyzing lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario, including depth and wind speed and looking at the impact any offshore projects would have on wildlife.

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--John Kourtoff, CEO, Trillium Power Wind Generation

"I have the responsibility for renewables within the Department of Natural Resources and the timing was just right to lift the deferral," said Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Donna Cansfield.

According to Cansfield, there are currently 14 projects that have been proposed in Ontario. One such project has been put forward by [Trillium Power Wind Corporation](#). This project is sited in the northeast corner of Lake Ontario where winds average approximately 24 kilometers/hour, and the company believes that it will be perfectly suited to take advantage of Ontario's wind resources.

"I think the case had been made, they had done the studies and they really looked into what offshore wind means," said John Kourtoff, CEO of Trillium. "At our site, when the winds come in, the vectors we deal with are 85 percent from a 90 degree, west/southwest vector. It will allow us to not have to turn the turbines in many directions. In the wind industry they always reference wind speed, but they miss power density. And if you look at a map of our site, that creates a difference in load tracking."

Trillium, along with all applicants must still undergo a review to ensure preliminary requirements are met before they can be awarded Applicant of Record status, which allows them to pursue the approvals required to construct and operate a wind power

facility. All proposed facilities must also go through an environmental assessment.

The [Department of Natural Resources](#) will not only look at the results of the reviews, it will also seek community input on the proposed projects. The review processes and the final planning stages should take another 2-3 years to complete but that once that is finished, Ontario will start seeing the benefits of offshore wind power.

“There's no question for me that renewables will play a large role in the energy mix in the province in the future,” Cansfield said. “This government is committed to developing clean, renewable sources of energy so Ontarians will have a sustainable supply of power now and in the future. Offshore applications we've received to date will be processed, and we are preparing to accept new applications for both onshore and offshore developments.”

All sides acknowledge that there are still hurdles to overcome before the first turbines start generating energy. These include access to adequate transmission capacity as well as not-in-my-backyard issues. According to Kourtoff these issues should not prevent well planned feasible projects from going forward.

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