

# Utility Dive

## New Jersey Gov. Christie vetoes offshore wind bill

By [Herman K. Trabish](#) | January 27, 2016

### Dive Brief:

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R) earlier this month vetoed a bill that called for the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to reconsider applications for smaller offshore wind projects, including the proposed 25 MW, \$200 million Fishermen's Energy project, North American Windpower reports.

Developers of the Fishermen's Energy wind project hoped the bill would open up opportunities for development and ease the BPU's initial concerns about the project's economic and technological viability to meet net benefit terms of New Jersey's [Offshore Wind Economic Development Act](#) (<http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/552010/approved/20100819a.html>) (OWEDA), the publication reports.

Gov. Christie's veto means the BPU will not revisit its decision on Fishermen's application, though a spokesman for Fishermen's Energy said BPU has the authority to accept a new application and "otherwise implement OWEDA."

### Dive Insight:

Critics have urged Gov. Christie to keep offshore wind power a player in the state's energy mix. But the veto has sparked worries from wind advocates that the Governor is playing politics as he continues his bid for the 2016 presidency.

Vetoing the legislation is essentially "holding offshore wind hostage to his national political ambition," according to [New Jersey Sierra Club](#) (<http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey>) Director Jeff Tittel in a statement. "Ports are waiting to be built, factories are sitting empty and jobs are waiting to be created... because the Christie Administration has stopped offshore wind."

One of the major concerns with the Fishermen's project in particular was the potentially high-priced electricity. But its developers said \$47 million in funding from the Department of Energy for the project and the recently-extended wind production tax credit could have changed BPU's tune.

"The project can produce power at a much lower price," according to COO Paul Gallagher, while also [creating nearly 500 jobs](#) (<http://www.fishermensenergy.com/atlantic-city-windfarm.php>) and inject more than \$150 million into New Jersey's economy. In one potential cost-cutting move, the

developers switched turbine manufacturers and are going with Siemen's 4 MW towers for the project.

But while it appears those smaller wind applications might be halted, Deepwater Wind's [30 MW, five turbine installation \(http://dwwind.com/block-island/block-island-project-overview\)](http://dwwind.com/block-island/block-island-project-overview) off Rhode Island's Block Island is still on track to be online by 2017, which would make it the first operational U.S. offshore wind project. Construction began last summer, with its output contracted by National Grid at \$0.244/kWh.

### Recommended Reading

North American Windpower: [Gov. Christie Returns N.J. Offshore Wind Bill Without Signature \(http://nawindpower.com/gov-christie-returns-n-j-offshore-wind-bill-without-signature\)](http://nawindpower.com/gov-christie-returns-n-j-offshore-wind-bill-without-signature)

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