

## BUSINESS

# Cuomo: Create LI institute to train wind farm workers



An aerial view of the Deepwater Windfarm operated by Orsted off the coast of Block Island, R.I. Credit: AllislandAerial.com / Kevin P. Coughlin

**By James T. Madore**

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The state will create a training institute on Long Island for prospective employees of planned offshore wind farms, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said Tuesday.

Cuomo said the state will spend \$20 million on the offshore wind training institute, to be housed at Stony Brook University and Farmingdale State College.

The institute will begin enrolling students next year and train 2,500 over the next five years, he said.



The U.S. offshore wind industry has started. First turbine, tower 1, installation complete at 8:30am. Thursday, August 4th, 2016 Providence, R.I. Block Island Wind Farm. Credit: Deepwater Wind

The institute could work with other institutions, such as union apprenticeship programs, the Composite Prototyping Center in Plainview and SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx, said a state official who requested anonymity.

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Cuomo's announcement follows a pledge by wind farm developer Orsted to invest \$10 million in a training center at Suffolk County Community College.

Orsted, which is based in Denmark, reached an agreement with the state last year for a wind farm off Montauk.

In July, Cuomo announced the most ambitious offshore wind initiative in the country: the Orsted farm and another farm south of Jones Beach to be developed by Norway-based Equinor. Together, the two wind farms would produce 1,700 megawatts, or enough electricity to power more than one million homes, by 2024.

The farms that have been announced so far will have construction sites in Albany and New York City and operations and maintenance centers in Brooklyn and Port Jefferson.

Orsted operates the nation's first offshore wind farm near Block Island, Rhode Island, and

has an agreement with the Long Island Power Authority for another off Montauk.

Cuomo will formally unveil the training institute during his State of the State speech on Wednesday in Albany.

Kevin Law, president of the Long Island Association business group, said the training institute would help prepare residents for jobs in a new industry. The Cuomo-appointed Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, which Law helps to lead, has been working for months to assess how the region can meet the needs of wind farm developers.

"As we continue to develop a clean energy economy on Long Island, these additional workforce development investments to train employees in the renewable energy industry are critical," Law said.

To be hired for some wind farm jobs, prospective employees must have earned a certification from the Global Wind Organization. The trade group has established standards for safety, including how to rescue someone who has fallen into the sea.

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GWO certifications apply to the construction and operation of wind farms, according to Brian Walencik, chairman of the group's North America committee.

Offshore wind farms are not without controversy.

Orsted's plan to bury an electrical transmission cable under an East Hampton road for its South Fork Wind Farm has been denounced by some Wainscott residents. Commercial fishermen have raised concerns about the impact wind turbines will have on marine life.

The wind farms proposed so far each face further regulatory hurdles at the municipal, state, and possibly, federal levels.

At Farmingdale State on Tuesday, college president John Nader said he was "elated" about news of the training institute.

"The wind industry has great promise with the potential to be economically and environmentally transformative for our region. This may well become the most significant large-scale project in Long Island's recent history," Nader said.

At Stony Brook, interim university president Michael A. Bernstein said its College of Engineering and Applied Sciences can give students an expertise in "wind resource assessment, wind turbine and wind-farm project design and optimization, offshore-wind project economics, public policy, social acceptance and environmental impacts, as well as energy storage and grid integration."

## **TRAINING WIND FARM WORKERS**

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced Tuesday the creation of the Offshore Wind Training Institute.

**Hosts:** Farmingdale State College, Stony Brook University

**Funding:** \$20 million from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, SUNY and the state Department of Labor

**Classes start:** Next year

**Jobs:** 2,500 jobs over five years in the offshore wind industry

**Potential partners:** Union apprenticeship programs, Composite Prototyping Center, SUNY Maritime College, Nassau Community College

**SOURCES:** Office of NYS Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, NYSERDA, Workforce Development Institute, Newsday research



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James T. Madore writes about Long Island business news including the economy, development, and the relationship between government and business. He previously served as Albany bureau chief.



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