

Danish power company coming to Atlantic City

MICHELLE BRUNETTE-POST Staff Writer

PRINCETON - New Jersey is going all-in on wind energy in an attempt to combat climate change and create a new industry to drive the economy, Gov. Phil Murphy told the fifth annual International Offshore Wind Partnering Forum here Tuesday.

And he got some good news there.

The Danish power company Orsted (formerly DONG Energy) will open an Atlantic City office in May, its President Thomas Brostrom said in his talk Wednesday morning.

Orsted spokesperson Lauren Burm said the company will start with two full-time staff in Atlantic City, and soon hire community relations staff to help keep the wind farm project on track, Later in the process it will hire construction and project managers, she said.

The 1,600 square foot office space is in the Bella Condominiums, she said. They are on Pacific Avenue near the Ocean Resort Casino, formerly the Revel.

The company recently announced it has an agreement with German steel manufacturer EEW to open a manufacturing facility in Massachusetts to provide materials for the wind farm it is building there.

"You could see something similar in New Jersey," Burm said.

Murphy said he was pleased with the announcement, but "the opening of an office is just a beginning."

He's more excited about what will come as the state develops both the ability to generate wind power and to manufacture windmill components.

Orsted's Ocean Wind project planned for about 10 miles off Atlantic City could generate up to 3,000 MW of electricity, enough to power about 1.5 million homes, Brostrom said.

Orsted is the world leader in offshore wind, building and operating more than 20 wind farms throughout Europe. It holds leases for developing wind farms off of Atlantic City, Massachusetts and Virginia.

Murphy welcomed hundreds of representatives of energy companies, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, and governments from around the world to New Jersey, and suggested future meetings be held on the shore where everyone can feel the coastal winds.

"I believe by working closely with you we can continue to drive down the cost of electric generation," he said.

"Ocean Wind will employ more than 1,000 people in construction jobs, and provide 100 good permanent jobs on completion," Murphy said of Orsted's planned wind farm.

Executives have said they plan to finish the project by 2025.

The state has the opportunity to foster an entirely new industry, Murphy said. He has committed New Jersey to generating 3,500 MW of electricity through offshore wind by 2030 and to get 100 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2050.

The state now gets about two percent of its energy from renewables, according to Board of Public Utilities President Joe Fiordaliso.

“We don’t want fossil fuel drilling,” Murphy said, referring to the Trump Administration’s intention to open the Atlantic Ocean to gas and oil drilling. “What we do want is wind turbines.”

The state is ideal for the offshore wind energy industry – both power generation and manufacturing of windmills -- because of its coastal winds and its location in the middle of the East Coast metropolis, he said. New Jersey has easy access to global markets through a large highway system and easy access to ports.

The conference is being held at the Westin Forrester here through Thursday. The conference is organized by the nonprofit Business Network for Offshore Wind. About 800 people registered, said Liz Burdock, executive director of the Network.