

Codey blocks windmills until 2006

Panel to examine offshore wind farms for 15 months.

By **TOM BALDWIN**
Gannett New Jersey

TRENTON — Acting Gov. Richard J. Codey on Thursday slapped a moratorium on power-generating windmills off the Shore, raising objections from environmentalists and elevating the issue for coastal residents who may have to look at the things.

"It is time for us to hear from the public," Codey said. "Is it implying that wind is bad?" countered David Pringle, campaign director for the New Jersey Environmental Federation.

Codey named a panel of nine members that will take 15 months to study drawing electric power from windmills planned 300 to 400 feet off the ocean's surface, at locales five miles at sea, from Monmouth County to Cape May County.

The panel members were all appointed by the governor. Six are described as being from the "public," and three are in Codey's Cabinet — top executives at the Board of Public Utilities, Department of Environmental Protection and the commerce commission.

None is to be paid, Codey spokeswoman Kelley Heck said.

The chairman, Red Bank Mayor Edward McKenna, is one of the public members, though he has worked as a lawyer for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, noted Jeff Tittel, head of the New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club, and Pringle.

"Mr. McKenna did do legal work on a specific issue with the sports authority," Heck said. "That is completed, so he technically is a civilian member."

Codey ordered a freeze on funding, the granting of permits and construction of any offshore windmills for the 15 months of the panel's study. The panel must have at least three public hearings before making its report, due by late March 2006.

The issue concerns legions of residents with questions about windmills that Pringle and Tittel said commonly deliver electricity to communities in northern Europe, as well as people with direct economic interests in the coast — from fishermen and boardwalk merchants to sea transportation companies and



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO
David Pringle of the New Jersey Environmental Federation speaks Thursday during a news conference at the Statehouse in Trenton.

rival power producers.

Questions, for example, include: Will the windmills be visible from beaches and boardwalks? Might they be hazards to commercial or recreational navigation? Will the owners be able to tell fishermen to steer clear? Are they noisy or a threat to birds?

"Today's action ensures that no offshore, wind-turbine facilities will be constructed for the next 15 months off New Jersey's shore," Codey said. "This issue raises important questions about how we will deal with global warming and air pollution levels and how we will utilize one of our most precious resources — the Jersey Shore."

Tittel said he would prefer the panel have a member from the alternative-energy realm.

But Pringle and one of the panelists, American Littoral Society executive director Timothy P. Dillingham, said there is one — Scott A. Weiner, who directs the Center for Energy, Economic and Environmental Policy at Rutgers and formerly ran the Department of Environmental Protection and utilities board.

"It's relatively balanced," Pringle said of the panel.

In addition to McKenna, Dillingham, Weiner and the three Cabinet members, the task force includes:

- Theodore J. Korth of the Audubon Society, from Bordentown, Burlington County.

- Bonnie J. McCay, a Rutgers professor and vice chairwoman of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee.

- Diane Wieland of Cape May Courthouse, director of tourism in Cape May County.