

Deepwater Wind buying turbines for Block Island wind farm from French supplier

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Deepwater Wind has agreed to buy the turbines for its proposed offshore wind farm near Block Island from French conglomerate Alstom.

Deepwater CEO Jeffrey Grybowski and his counterpart at Alstom, Patrick Kron, are set to announce the agreement at a ceremonial signing ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Monday afternoon.

The companies signed contracts in late December, but waited to release the news to coincide with the visit of French president Francois Hollande to the United States. Arnaud Montebourg, the French minister of industrial renewal, is also expected to attend the signing ceremony.

Under the deal, Alstom will build five six-megawatt Haliade 150 wind turbines for Providence-based Deepwater and will service the turbines for 15 years after they go into operation. Because the turbines will need regular maintenance Alstom has agreed to base its service team in Rhode Island, which, said Grybowski, means more local jobs in addition to the six permanent positions Deepwater initially envisioned with its project.

Alstom will also consider doing more assembly work and finishing of the turbines in Rhode Island.

“They have agreed to explore what we can do locally,” Grybowski said in an interview. “We are hopeful that we can base more construction activities here.”

Grybowski would not disclose the size of the contract with Alstom, but said that it’s the largest single element of the \$300 million project that includes the 30-megawatt wind farm and a submarine cable from Block Island to the mainland.

Alstom has already started building Deepwater’s turbines. To qualify for a federal investment tax credit that expired on Dec. 31, Deepwater made its first payment to Alstom upon signing the contract to guarantee that work on the turbines would start before the end of 2013. The payment of several million dollars covers the manufacture of the five turbines’ blades.

In a statement, Andy Geissbuehler, general manager of Alstom Wind North America, said, “We are pleased to be able to provide Deepwater Wind an efficient and powerful turbine that is in an ideal match for their exciting project.”

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