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It is now all but certain that a 30-megawatt pilot project in Rhode Island state waters will be America's first offshore wind farm.

Deepwater Wind, the Providence, R.I.-based developer behind the Block Island project, announced this week that it had closed on more than \$290 million in financing from American and French backers.

"We're full speed ahead and moving ever closer to 'steel in the water,'" Deepwater Wind CEO Jeffrey Grybowski said in a statement. "We're on the cusp of bringing offshore wind from theory to reality in the U.S."

The project, which will comprise five turbines located about 3 miles off Block Island and about 18 miles from the mainland, is also fully permitted.

According to Deepwater Wind spokeswoman Meaghan Wims, components of the farm are now under construction, including the blades and the steel foundations. The project is slated to begin providing power by the end of 2016.

The \$290 million in financing was provided by the France-based Société Générale and the Cleveland-based KeyBank National Association. This was in addition to the more than \$70 million in equity funding from Deepwater Wind's owners, principally of the D.E. Shaw Group.

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"We are pleased to provide financing for the first offshore wind project to be fully financed in the U.S., and look forward to working with Deepwater on future, transformative projects," Andrew Redinger, managing director and head of KeyBanc Capital Markets' Utilities, Power and Renewables Group, said in a statement.

Europe: 74 offshore farms; United States: 0

Lewis Milford, president of the Vermont-based nonprofit Clean Energy Group, said the announcement is "obviously good news" for offshore wind development, but he added that it's unclear whether it truly signals that the industry is about to gain momentum in the United States.

"Having that success raises the bigger question of what's next — what's in the pipeline after that demonstration project?" he said.

The United States lags far behind other parts of the world on offshore wind development. There are now 74 offshore wind farms in Europe, the European Wind Energy Association reports, with a total installed capacity of 8,045 MW.

Cape Wind, a long-embattled, much larger offshore wind project planned for Massachusetts' Nantucket Sound, recently faced a significant setback when two utilities, Northeast Utilities and National Grid, opted out of agreements to purchase the bulk of power produced by the farm, citing its inability to secure financing by the end of 2014 (*Greenwire*, Jan. 7).

However, *The Boston Globe* reported Sunday that at a rally in Boston over the weekend, Cape Wind President Jim Gordon told reporters "we are not giving up" and explained that his team will be contacting the utilities to "see if we can amicably resolve the situation."



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