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David A. Logan
Dean and Professor of Law

A Message from the Dean: 7th Marine Law Symposium



The Marine Affairs Institute is one of RWU Law's centers of excellence. Working with the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island Sea Grant, it plays an important role by bringing together lawyers, scientists and policymakers to analyze issues that impact coastal communities and marine businesses across New England. This fall they will help create a legal regime for wind energy from the ground (or seafloor) up.



Energy is on everyone's minds lately, whether contemplating prices at the gas pump, debating the merits of increased offshore oil drilling or examining a presidential candidate's proposed energy policy. Everyone agrees we must look to renewable energy as part of the solution, and producing renewable energy in the oceans is part of this discussion. What makes the topic so interesting for lawyers is that the regulation of the renewable-energy industry is literally being constructed on a real-time basis. The Marine Affairs Institute was particularly prescient in identifying such a cutting-edge, timely issue for RWU Law's 2008 Marine Law Symposium.

Renewable energy projects, in the ocean particularly, illustrate the need for a comprehensive approach. The marine environment raises complex jurisdictional issues, in addition to the problems associated with using public-trust resources. So far, projects have been considered on a case-by-case basis and encounter a fragmented regulatory scheme scattered among a number of state and federal agencies. Financial and economic incentives are not well developed in the U.S., and there are concerns over the environmental impacts upon coastal communities and marine ecosystems.

The future of offshore wind, wave, tidal and ocean thermal energy conversion projects in the United States will be explored at the 7th Marine Law Symposium on October 23 and 24 at the School of Law. Federal officials will discuss the current regulatory environment, financial experts and private industry representatives will explore economic and policy considerations, and lawyers will assess the legal implications. Technological experts will discuss renewable energy integration, focusing on engineering, marketing and policy. Representatives from nonprofit organizations and experts from the UK, Greece and Ireland will offer their perspectives as well. The symposium will point us in the right direction on this important topic.

It will also mark the Institute's first major event under its new Director – Susan Farady, who brings a remarkable range of experiences to this vital part of our program. Welcome aboard, Susan!

For more information about the 7th Marine Law Symposium, please visit the Marine Affairs Institute website at: <http://law.rwu.edu/sites/marineaffairs>.

