

FERC Issues First Pilot Hydrokinetic License to New York Tidal Project

Escrito por Power

Miércoles 25 de Enero de 2012 00:00



The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on Monday issued its first pilot project license to Verdant Power's 1,050-kW Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy (RITE) project.

The 10-year pilot license is the first issued since FERC developed the pilot license process in 2008 to test new hydrokinetic technologies, to determine appropriate sites for these technologies, and to confirm the technologies' environmental effects "without compromising FERC's oversight," FERC said in a statement.

Under the process, projects eligible for a license must be small, short-term, located in an environmentally non-sensitive area (determined with an environmental analysis), and removable on short notice. The license also requires that projects are removed and the site restored before the end of the license term—unless a new license is obtained.

According to FERC, 100 preliminary permits have already been issued to study the feasibility of developing hydrokinetic projects under the process, and nine entities are in the pre-filing stages of developing license applications. Besides Verdant Power, only three other entities have filed license applications: Ocean Power Technologies, for its 1.5 MW Reedsport Wave Park in Oregon; Tideswork for a 5-MW tidal project in Maine; and Ocean Renewable Power Co. for its 0.3-MW Cobscook Bay tidal pilot in Maine.

Verdant Power's RITE project seeks to use the natural tidal currents of the East River to generate electricity via turbine generator units mounted on the riverbed. Verdant's Kinetic Hydropower System (KHPS) turbines will capture energy from the flow in both ebb and flood directions by yawing with the changing tide, using a passive system with a downstream rotor.

New York's East River is a 17-mile-long tidal strait connecting the waters of Long Island Sound with those of the Atlantic Ocean in New York Harbor and separates the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx from Brooklyn and Queens. A saltwater river, the East River is predominantly controlled by tidal influence.

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For more on the RITE pilot project, see “New York City Backs Tidal Power” in POWER’s May 2011 issue.

Sources: POWERnews, FERC, Verdant Power