

2.12 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding wind farms on Jersey's offshore reefs and their impact on RAMSAR designation:

Would the Minister advise whether he is in favour of wind farms on our offshore reefs, why he is considering allowing the expense and intrusion of monitoring masts and how this issue fits within the Ramsar designation?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

I am not in favour of wind farms on Jersey's offshore reefs, however, the temporary location of wind monitoring masts on these reefs would be of benefit to the Island in 3 particular areas. The quality of meteorological data at and near the reefs could be improved, safety at sea for all marine users would also be improved, and we would also have an improved understanding of offshore wind patterns to help assess potential for renewable wind energy in Jersey's territorial waters, albeit not on the reefs. The location of any masts on our reefs will, however, require planning permission. The reefs are within the Coastal National Park and of the Ramsar designated area, and policy requires that they are given the highest level of protection from development. Any application received will therefore be subject to due process and include full consultation.

2.12.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I am glad to hear that the Minister is not considering wind farms on our offshore reefs. Could he further explain why monitoring masts are then of benefit on the reefs if in fact the wind farms are not going to be there? Would it not be more beneficial to put the monitoring masts where it is intended to put wind farms?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Indeed it would be and if the Island were approached by some external party wanting to build a wind farm in our territorial waters then indeed a whole host of extra monitoring would have to be undertaken in order to assess the potential for that wind farm. However, as I said, there are only 2 masts being considered at the moment, one on each of the reefs. There are not many external anemometers that are in coastal waters. There is a bit of a dearth of data in terms of wind speeds on the reefs and, as I have said, the primary reason for these masts is to improve the meteorological data near to the reefs and to improve marine user safety.