NASA Maps Reveal Wind Energy Sources

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Efforts to harness the energy potential of Earth's ocean winds could soon gain an fundamental new tool, global satellite maps from NASA. Scientists have been creating maps using nearly a decade of notes from NASA's QuikSCAT satellite that reveal ocean areas where the wind resources exist to produce wind energy.

The new maps could help developers better plan the locations of offshore wind farms. The research was funded by NASA's Earth Science Division, which works to advance the frontiers of scientific discovery about Earth and its climate.

"Wind energy is environmentally friendly. After the

initial energy investment to build and install wind turbines, you don't burn fossil fuels that emit carbon," said study lead author Tim Liu, a senior research scientist and QuikSCAT science team leader at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "Like solar capability, wind energy is green energy."

QuikSCAT, launched in 1999, tracks the speed, direction and ability of winds near the ocean surface. details from QuikSCAT, collected continuously by a specialized microwave radar instrument named SeaWinds, additionally are used to predict storms and enhance the accuracy of weather forecasts.

[Source] *DForce*

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