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## Another wind farm plan proposed SW of Island

By Nelson Sigelman - March 13, 2008

A Dutch-owned company wants to harness the ocean winds that blow 23 miles southwest of Squibnocket Point in Chilmark. On Monday Blue H USA LLC unveiled a proposal to build a floating 120-turbine offshore wind farm in 167 feet of water.

Company representatives held a press conference in Hyannis Monday to announce that they had filed a lease request with the US Minerals Management Service (MMS) to install what they expect would be the first floating deepwater wind farm in the United States. It would be capable of generating 429 megawatts of power.

The timing of the announcement was intended to provide a contrast with Cape Wind Associates and the controversy surrounding a plan to place 130 wind turbines on Horseshoe Shoal in Nantucket Sound. That proposal was the subject of a series of MMS public hearings this week including one on Martha's Vineyard yesterday.

In a telephone conversation with The Times Tuesday Blue H general manager Ray Dackerman and Martin Reilly, president of Reilly Associates, said the start of the MMS hearings provided a good opportunity to point out that alternative deep-water technology now exists.



The approximate location of the proposed floating wind farm. Click photo for larger version.

Blue H has adapted the technology developed by the oil industry for offshore oil drilling platforms according to a company press release. Unlike a conventional wind turbine that rests on a pole or tripod driven into the sea floor, Blue H utilizes a submerged deepwater platform anchored to the sea floor.

The company claims that by utilizing this technique it can take advantage of stronger and less turbulent winds and help to address issues of visual impact. Turbines can be assembled on shore and towed offshore, and they are easily dismantled.

The parent company is Blue H Technologies BV. The company is currently testing a large-scale prototype 10 miles off the coast of the southern Italian city of Brindisi and has plans to construct a 90-megawatt wind park.

Mr. Dackerman said the company is currently opening an office in Needham and has an investment team comprised of wealthy investors with strong political connections.

Mr. Dackerman said another attraction was the close proximity to leaders in wind technology research, including the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He said the company wants to engage people early in the process to make the process more efficient and avoid lengthy battles.

"The company spent two years looking for a site in Massachusetts," said Mr. Reilly, a former state senator from Springfield who acts as a spokesman for the company.

The offshore Vineyard site was selected because it is an area without a great deal of boat traffic, does not sustain a fishery and places Blue H in the center of the state and national debate over wind power. Mr. Reilly said Blue H USA wants to have a test demonstration in the water by the summer of 2009. "This can be a win-win-win for everybody," said Mr. Reilly.

Some critics of Cape Wind see the Blue H proposal as a viable alternative. Supporters of Cape Wind see something in the timing of the Blue H announcement as an effort to sink Cape Wind.

As the controversy surrounding the Cape Wind proposal played out this week in four separate hearings on the Cape and islands and in Boston, an editorial published Tuesday in the Boston Globe, "Winds of change off the Cape,"

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Tug boats tow a prototype floating wind turbine out of Brindisi, in southern Italy. Click photo for larger version.

argued that "the need for renewable energy is so great that any deepwater plans should supplement Cape Wind, not replace it."

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