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# News

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# DON ALLEN FORD



### Deep-water wind farm plan floated off Vineyard

By Joshua Balling  
I&M Managing Editor

As federal hearings on the proposed Horseshoe Shoal wind farm continue this week, a new player has entered the region's renewable energy game.

Blue H USA LLC has proposed a \$900 million to \$1 billion 120-turbine wind farm in 40 square miles of deep water between Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford.

Blue H tackled its first regulatory hurdle this week by applying for a lease with the U.S. Minerals Management Service to install a test unit in 167 feet of water out of the view of land 23 miles from Martha's Vineyard and 45 miles from New Bedford.

"We are confident we will be approved for the demonstration project by the MMS, and we hope to have it in the water by next summer. After that, we plan to move forward with a full-scale wind energy project: 120 turbines generating 420 megawatts of energy," said former state Sen. Marty Reilly, who is handling government relations, business development and public relations for Blue H.

"Deep water technology now exists, and it's viable. The cost of generation will be less than any other offshore wind energy generation project proposed to date at this time. At the same time, because it's in deep water, it won't be visible from shore, so it will preserve the aesthetic beauty of our ocean sanctuaries and shorefront communities, and not be in close proximity to shipping lanes, recreational boating or fishing areas."

By contrast, Cape Wind Associates has proposed erecting 130 wind turbines capable of generating 468 megawatts of power in 24 square miles of shallow water in Nantucket Sound between Cape Cod and Nantucket at a cost estimated to exceed \$1 billion. The project has generated fierce debate in the seven years since it was first proposed.

Blue H officials say deep-water wind generation is viable because they will be using submerged tension-legged platforms, developed by the oil industry for offshore rigs, to support a platform, tower and wind turbine in "most foreseeable weather conditions."

The SDP consists of a hollow steel body, which provides the buoyancy, held semi-submerged under water by chains which connect it to anchors on the sea bottom. One offshore wind-energy converter is mounted on top of each SDP. Electricity generated by the deep-water wind farm would be transmitted to New Bedford by an undersea cable, Reilly said.

Blue H is currently testing a large-scale prototype Submerged Deepwater Platform (SDP) in 325 feet of water 10.6 miles off the coast of southern Italy and hopes to have it commercially viable by next year.

Chartered in the Netherlands, Blue H has been in existence for just over two years, but the patented technology it's using has been in development for over a decade. Blue H's CEO is Neal Bastick, an international businessman with both British and Canadian citizenships. It is financially backed by a number of wealthy investors, including high-ranking executives with the Royal Bank of Scotland, Lehman Brothers and Superfast Ferries of Greece, said Blue H general manager Roy Dackerman.

The site between Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford was carefully chosen, Reilly said. "Blue H USA spent the last two years looking for the most appropriate site in Massachusetts, using data provided by the federal Department of Energy. It determined that the greatest wind velocities are found in deep waters. Because the velocities of wind are much stronger and greater, you can generate power at a less expensive price. Because Blue H has the patented technology, it will lead to cost of construction much less than other shallow-water projects."

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