

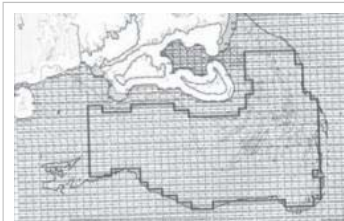
# THE NANTUCKET Independent

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



## Offshore renewable energy site worries Planning Commission

BY PETER B. BRACE INDEPENDENT WRITER



The outlined area represents the federal government's plan to lease lots in an area that is nearly 4,000 square nautical miles for offshore energy.

At 3,985-square nautical miles, the Minerals Management Service's recently unveiled marine renewable energy zone south and east of the island dwarfs the 24 square-nautical-mile site for Cape Wind's 130-wind-turbine installation in the middle of Nantucket Sound.

Despite its offshore location, the Nantucket Planning & Economic Development Commission has serious concerns about this new renewable energy development area that runs nine miles from the island's east and south shores, wrapping around Nantucket from Great Point to Madaket and extending south of Martha's Vineyard.

The industrial park on the Outer Continental Shelf, called the Request for Interest (RFI) area, extends 22 to 50 miles out to the 180-foot depth ocean's contour. The proposed park is broken up into 448 federal lease blocks, approximately nine square nautical miles in size, intended for commercial renewable energy installations. Last winter, Blue H USA proposed just such a project consisting of 120

floating, anchored wind turbines to be sited 23 miles south of Martha's Vineyard in 167 feet of water.

On Feb. 1, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior issued its RFI for Renewable Energy Leasing off Massachusetts seeking interest from commercial wind energy entities, for example, Blue H USA. The RFI period remains open, but the deadline for public comment was Feb. 5. The NP&EDC managed to compose and submit its concerns by this deadline, many of which address the potential impacts on Nantucket.

In its letter to the MMS Massachusetts Renewable Energy Uses of the Outer Continental Shelf Task Force, the NP&EDC said that the MMS should concentrate wind, tidal and other offshore renewable energy power plants in the five-mile-wide-by-30-mile long National Offshore Renewable Energy Innovation Zone. The University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth's Marine Renewable Energy Center delineated the NOREIZ, south of the Muskeget Channel last year for pilot and permanent alternative energy technology projects.


"Areas south and east of Nantucket have not received the amount of study as the South of Tuckernuck area," wrote the commission in its letter to the MMS. "Furthermore, this area is heavily fished and is likely more visually disruptive due to its proximity to populations areas."

The RFI area is in uncharted waters for the installation of transmission lines. That route is likely to pass near or over Nantucket. Planning director Andrew Vorce said he is currently applying for a grant to study submarine infrastructure routes for the NOREIZ, which is closer to the islands and the mainland.

The NP&EDC also stressed that such transmission upgrades provide benefits to and connection with local communities, including Nantucket, while utilizing their existing power cable system via the NOREIZ and that the islands must have a say in commercial leases issued by the MMS.

"Landfall interconnection also provides no incentive for local support," wrote the NP&EDC in its letter. "The MMS process should ensure that adjacent communities have an opportunity to be actively involved with the commercial leases and examine amending its rules so that some level of direct benefits flow to adjacent communities."

The RFI area must also be compatible with the state's Ocean Management Plan.

-  Caroler & Stroll Guide
- Front Page
- Other News
- Datebook
- The Arts
- Opinion
- Columns
- Classifieds
- Archive
- Nantucket Real Estate Guide
- 2009 Nantucket Wedding Planner
- Channels
- Advertise
- Subscribe
- Shopping Page
- Advertisers Index
- Classified Order
- Contact Us
- Copyright 2004 - 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved



Newspaper web site content management software and services

DMCA Notices



The Nantucket Independent on Facebook

Become a Fan

The Nantucket Independent has 452 Fans



Kelly Matt Tori



The Nantucket Independent on Facebook

### NANTUCKET SHUTTLE AIRLINES

Islanders asked for SPECIAL rates on WEEKEND FLIGHTS and Nantucket Shuttle Listened!

**\$24.44** Weekend Specials!



**\$24.44** Weekend Specials!

**Weekend Specials!**  
ALL FLIGHTS EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY!  
Nantucket to Hyannis = **\$24.44\***  
Hyannis to Nantucket = **\$24.44\***  
Round Trip = **\$48.88!**

**And still enjoy our Weekday Specials!**  
**MORNING FLIGHTS** - ACK to Hyannis \$26.00 (all fee inc)  
Monday - Friday  
6:30am • 7:05am • 7:45pm • 8:10am  
**AFTERNOON FLIGHTS** - Hyannis to ACK \$26.00 (all fee inc)  
Monday - Friday  
2:35pm • 3:05pm • 4:00pm • 4:25pm

**Normal Shuttle STILL has the best rates on Connector Booked**  
5 Trips \$214.99 10 Trips \$409.99  
Reservations call 508-771-2711

Call for Special Pricing for 10th Cruise deals! 508-340-2853

\*Base of \$24.44 includes all applicable taxes and fees. Minimum 10 days in advance. \*\*The price for a round trip with transfer is listed at \$139.99. †This price does not include baggage. ‡This does not include change without penalty.

"I think that both the Vineyard and Nantucket have concerns if an installation were to ring around Nantucket, what would the benefits be even if it is a green project," said Vorce.

The NOREIZ, south of the Muskeget Channel is where the Planning Commission and the Town of Edgartown are currently planning Nantucket's 10 wind turbines allowed by the state's Ocean Management Plan for coastal communities and tidal energy generators, respectively.

Vorce and the NP&EDC argue that the NOREIZ has already been reviewed, studied and accepted as a viable location for the testing of new alternative energy technologies, and permanent installations, and as such, would be better suited for the MMS' tenants.

"There's about 78 of those blocks that extend due south of the Muskeget Channel," said Vorce. "That's where we're suggesting they get wind energy developers to put their installations. They are within this [RFI] zone."

Adding to the mix, both Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard are nervous about the very real possibility that Cape Wind might have to relocate its wind farm into this or a nearby area. Should the Wampanoag tribes in the region convince Secretary of the Interior Kenneth Salazar, who toured Cape Wind's proposed site for 130 wind turbines in Nantucket Sound two weeks ago, to issue a negative record of decision on Cape Wind, this developer might be forced to move its project south of Martha's Vineyard, if it chose to pursue an alternate location.

Both state Senator Robert O'Leary and Congressman Bill Delahunt signed a letter to Sec. Salazar encouraging this idea. The NP&EDC, however, is against it.

"No, we're not advocating it at all," said Vorce. "The point is it's been raised by Save Our Sound and it's been raised by officials in Barnstable without a whole lot discussion with Nantucket." |