

# Opinion

## MY VIEW: CAPE WIND

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### STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY OPPOSES WIND FARM

By Wayne Lamson

The wind farm currently being proposed by Cape Wind Associates in Nantucket Sound will create significant hazards to the safe navigation of the Steamship Authority's vessels and to other users of the waterways surrounding Horseshoe Shoal.

Under certain wind and sea conditions, our captains must use tacking maneuvers to ease the vessel's ride for the safety and comfort of our passengers. These tacking maneuvers have historically taken our vessels into areas of Nantucket Sound near the proposed wind farm site.

The ferries that serve the islands make thousand of crossings per year. Last summer, the Steamship Authority and Hy-Line ferries made 46 scheduled crossings per day between Hyannis and Nantucket. The ferries need room to maneuver, not only to keep a safe distance from each other but also to respond to other vessel traffic that is in the area, especially in extreme foggy conditions.

The 2006 Revised Navigational Risk Assessment prepared by ESS Group, on behalf of CWA, failed to take into consideration that vessels using this particular area of Nantucket Sound do not always travel in straight lines due to vessel traffic congestion, restricted visibility and adverse weather conditions. The Minerals Management Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, released in January, has similarly minimized the potential navigational impact by concluding that it is unlikely that a meeting situation would be encountered in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm project.

A chart of the scheduled ferry crossings by the Steamship Authority and Hy-Line, including the trips by our respective high-speed vessels, shows a somewhat different picture of the encounters that are likely to occur on a typical day in the summer. Adding further to traffic congestion, the wind farm will force more small vessel traffic into the ferry routes with a sub-

sequent increased risk of an accident.

In addition, the Steamship Authority has a concern with the potential negative effects of radar interference by wind turbines in close proximity to ferry routes and shipping channels. In a 2004 study at the North Hoyle wind farm in the United Kingdom, the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency concluded, in part that "clutter in the radar display due to the presence of wind turbines was found to be considerable." The large echoes from the turbine towers and blades cause long arcs of side lobe echoes on the radar display.

These strong side lobe echoes produce a smearing effect on the radar display and would prevent the detection of small vessels located in these side lobe echoes. Radar interference was detected starting at a range of about 1.5 nautical miles from the wind turbines at the North Hoyle wind farm. The ESS study did not adequately analyze the potential interference of wind turbines on ship-based radar systems. No effective means of mitigating the interference to marine radars from offshore wind farm installations has been identified.

The necessity of altering the current Hyannis-Nantucket ferry routes further to the east in order to achieve safe separation from the proposed wind farm site would substantially increase the travel time and cause more fuel to be consumed. The Steamship Authority has estimated that an additional 300,000 gallons of fuel would be consumed annually by moving its Hyannis to Nantucket ferry route further to the east.

The Steamship Authority also has navigational concerns associated with the formation of ice. The revised ESS study minimized the frequency and/or severity of ice events in Nantucket Sound. Ferry service to Nantucket has been significantly affected in recent years by the accumulation of ice in Nantucket Sound. These ice floes, which move with the tide in an east-west direction and vice-versa, will undoubtedly be restricted by an array of 130 wind turbines over the proposed 25 square mile area in the middle of Nantucket Sound.

The MMS's Draft Environmental Impact Statement did not address the potential navigational impacts of radar interference or the formation of ice in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm. The U.S. Coast Guard is waiting for further studies and information from CWA before determining what additional mitigation measures may be necessary.

In our view, these legitimate concerns should have been analyzed and addressed prior to the release of the MMS's Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

— Wayne Lamson is general manager of the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority

### A CRITICAL PART OF THE SOLUTION

By Barbara J. Hill and Laura Wasserman

This past September, we were privileged to attend the United Nations Conference on Climate Change entitled "Climate Change — How it Impacts Us All." Over 1,700 representatives from 66 countries and over 490 non-governmental organizations, as well as scientists and leading members of the International Panel on Climate Change, attended the conference.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his welcoming remarks, declared, "Few issues match climate change in the threat they pose to all of humanity or the joint efforts they demand from us."

We heard tragic stories about how the actions of industrialized nations are affecting the most vulnerable citizens of the world — indigenous people fighting for their very survival. One such story came from Mikhail Todishev, a representative from the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, who shared heartbreaking descriptions of what is happening in an eastern Siberian village.

Todishev spoke about the steadily declining food supply for polar bears, a result of decreasing ice territory. The consequences are alarming. The infiltration of polar bears into local villages has increased tenfold since the Arctic ice on which the bears live and feed began disappearing. As a result, parents in these villages carry their children to school on their shoulders and with guns in their hands as protection against the hungry animals.

When we emit pollution into the air on a massive scale, we lose the right to make decisions based solely on the impacts to our immediate environment. Our actions affect people who not only live halfway around the world, but who also do nothing to contribute to these harmful consequences.

Air and water pollution do not respect geographic boundaries. Our pollution on the Cape and Islands comes from fossil-fueled power plants as far as the Midwest and as near as Sandwich, contaminating our land, waterways and estuaries. Carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels circulate worldwide, a major cause of global warming.

Time is short and the impacts of our energy use must be mitigated. People of the Commonwealth know the dangers and the need for a solution. Polls show 84 percent of Massachusetts citizens and 61 percent of those residents on the Cape and Islands support the Cape Wind project.

As Ki-moon said, "We must ensure that we fulfill our promise of a better world for tomorrow's generations." The Cape Wind project is an essential part of the solution.

— Barbara J. Hill is executive director and Laura Wasserman is director of Clean Power Now

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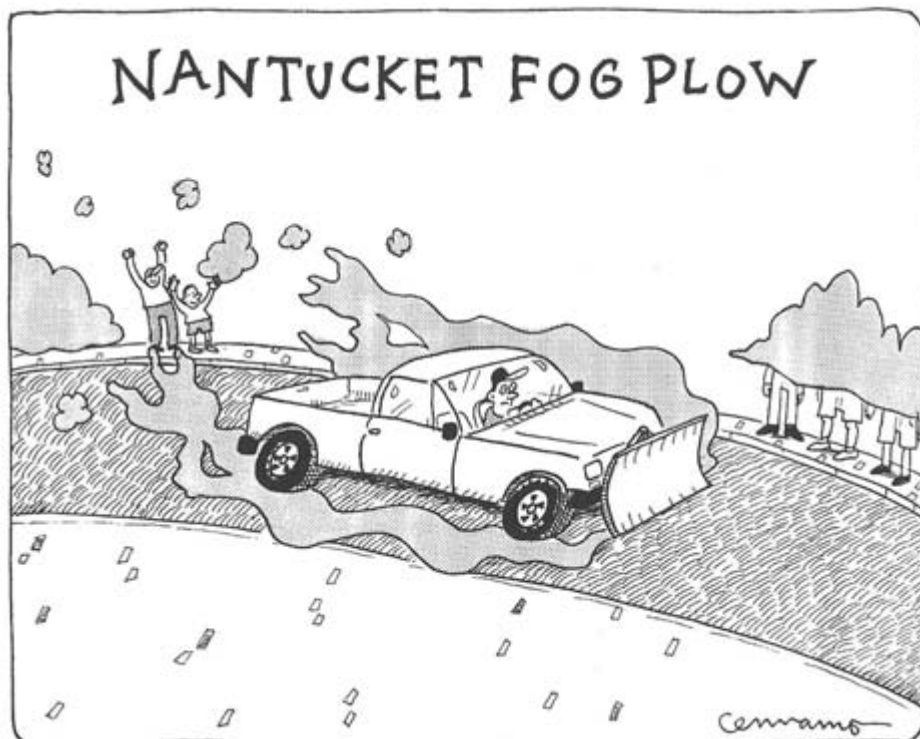
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