

MEMORANDUM

TO: Libby Gibson, Town Manager
FROM: Lauren Sinatra, Energy Coordinator
RE: Offshore Wind Activities
DATE: February 13, 2019



As the most remote island community located within the Commonwealth, Nantucket is particularly vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change and rising sea levels, perhaps more so than any other Massachusetts city or town.

Nantucket is the closest community in geographical proximity to several proposed offshore wind development areas, and as such, is in a unique position to support the responsible development of cost-effective wind energy projects, with the least adverse impacts on Nantucket's natural environment, maritime economy, and rich cultural heritage.

Since 2009, Massachusetts has been leading an intensive effort with the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to establish leasing areas for offshore wind beginning 14 miles south of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. The Commonwealth has set an ambitious agenda to become the national hub for the emerging offshore wind industry along the East Coast, with projects accelerating at a rapid pace. On June 29, 2017 the Massachusetts Electric Distribution Companies, in coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for long-term contracts for offshore wind energy projects. On May 23, 2018, the winning bid of the procurement was awarded to Vineyard Wind for an 800-megawatt (MW) offshore wind energy generation project, now on the fast track for development.

In total, four offshore wind companies have lease agreements with BOEM, to develop windfarms in seven distinct areas in federal waters, south of Nantucket. The companies, including Ørsted, Vineyard Wind, Equinor, and Mayflower Wind Energy (a 50:50 joint venture between Shell and EDPR), are in various stages of windfarm development, with Vineyard Wind furthest ahead in the project permitting process.

Recent developments include:

- On November 7, 2018, BOEM held a Section 106 consultation meeting for the Vineyard Wind Offshore Wind Energy Project on Nantucket, with the goal of discussing viewshed assessments, visual simulations, and assessing effects to historic properties. Information conveyed during the meeting indicates that BOEM intends to make a **"finding of adverse effects"** to multiple historic properties within the project viewshed, including the Nantucket Historic District—a National Historic Landmark.

Local "consulting parties" must negotiate mitigation measures to be included in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), as a requirement of the Section 106 Review Process and condition of Vineyard Wind's Construction & Operation Plan (COP) approval.

- BOEM is currently accepting public comments for the agency's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Vineyard Wind's proposed 800-megawatt (MW) wind farm, due by February 22, 2019. BOEM encourages the Town of Nantucket to provide input via this process,

which will inform the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), on topics such as:

- Impacts to **threatened or endangered species**
 - **Air and water quality** impacts
 - Impacts to **historic and cultural sites**
 - **Social and Economic impacts** to local communities, including **economic impacts to businesses, property values, aesthetics** and noise within the affected area
- Bay State Wind, an Ørsted company, is currently developing their Construction and Operations Plan (COP) for submittal to BOEM by April. The company is currently seeking local stakeholder input for properties to include in their Visual Impact Assessments (VIA).

To ensure that the Town of Nantucket and impacted members of the community are regularly informed and actively engaged by offshore wind developers seeking to develop wind farms sited in Nantucket's visual vicinity or which seek to bring export cables through local waters, the Energy Office recommends the Select Board:

1. Consider the proposed DEIS comments, which were reached in consensus with various local stakeholders and consulting parties. These comments primarily aim to minimize nighttime lighting impacts and reduce daytime visual impacts. The comments also insist for BOEM to apply best-practice criteria however and whenever possible, to avoid the industry learning valuable lessons at Nantucket's expense.
2. Appoint a primary point of contact at the Town and establish a dedicated advisory workgroup to represent the best interests of the island to wind developers seeking to build windfarms offshore Nantucket. The workgroup will assist Town leadership to:
 - Evaluate local environmental, economic, and/or visual impacts
 - Determine appropriate project mitigation measures to offset perceived and assessed impacts, including through the Section 106 review process
 - Negotiate for tangible community benefits, such as through a Community Benefit Agreement, offshore wind mitigation trust fund, or other economic development arrangements, as are standard in the offshore wind industry for impacted communities

Energy Coordinator, Lauren Sinatra, will be present at the February 20, 2019 Select Board meeting to discuss these recommendations and to address any questions.



