

Sound sound-off

By **JOHN LEANING**
STAFF WRITER

OAK BLUFFS - Nearly 300 islanders braved cold winds and rain last night to listen to neighbors and friends give their views on the nation's first offshore wind farm, proposed for Nantucket Sound some nine miles off Edgartown Harbor.

While some protested the despoiling of a natural maritime treasure, others stood up for their children, saying they

would rather see turbines in the sound than have their sons and daughters fighting overseas to protect this country's oil interests.

And then there were the young adults, two students at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, who urged approval of the project, bluntly telling adults they should stop thinking of themselves and think about the mess they were leaving their children.

"You should be embarrassed at the world you left me," chided 16-year-old Emily Lindsey of West Tisbury. "We're going to be the ones suffering."

But none of the half-dozen or so commercial fishermen and large-vessel captains who spoke out agreed with that statement. To a man, they warned of lost income, navigational nightmares and the loss of prime fishing ground they have worked and lived on for years.

At press time, 43 of 58 speakers had had their three minutes before the microphones at the high school, the site of the first of three hearings this week on the wind farm proposal. Another is set for tonight at Mat-tacheese Middle School in West Yarmouth.

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divided at press time.

Although opinions sharply differed, politeness and principle seemed to be guiding forces for all speakers, even those who took positions directly counter to those of the previous speaker.

The Rev. Alden Besse, from Grace Episcopal Church in Vineyard Haven, told the group he thought everyone can learn to "like, admire and approve new things," and he encouraged people to take up the challenge of being "on the cutting edge of doing something creative and beautiful" for the environment.

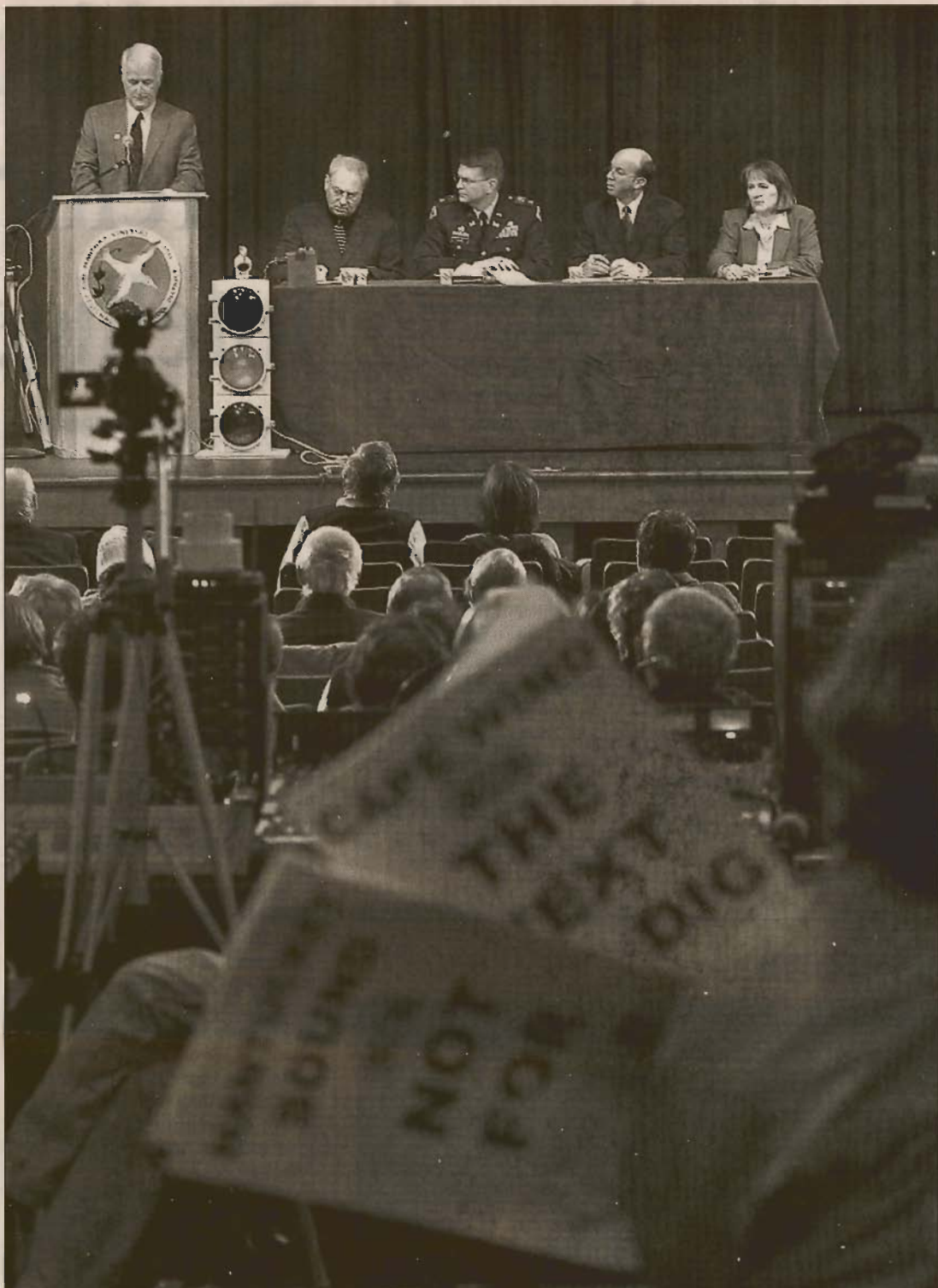
But Christine Doyle-Burke of Edgartown, who raised several complex questions about the project, struggled with tears as she described her impression of the visual impact the proposed wind farm would have.

More than three years ago, Cape Wind Associates, of Boston and Yarmouthport, unveiled plans for the country's first offshore wind farm facility in a 24-square-mile tract of Nantucket Sound on Horseshoe Shoal.

The proposal calls for 130 wind turbines atop steel monopiles driven about 80 feet into the ocean floor. The top of each turbine rotor blade would reach about 417 feet above sea level.

There would also be a large transformer building, with about 40,000 gallons of coolant oil, which would switch the electricity from the turbines to undersea cables and from there on to landfall in Yarmouth.

The project, if approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, could produce at average output enough electricity to satisfy about 75 percent of the Cape's average electrical demand.



High-profile opponents

Proponents, including a number of environmental groups, applaud the project, since it will produce clean energy without any air pollution, reduce dependency on foreign oil, and help combat global warming.

Opponents, including Massachusetts Republican Gov. Mitt Romney, U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy and U.S. Rep. William Delahunt, both Democrats, and many state legislators from the area, argue that while wind power is good, this project is located in the wrong place.

They also argue that no project should be built in the Outer Continental Shelf until adequate federal regulations are in place to, among other things, determine the best sites for development and to establish fair fees paid by developers to the public for use of public resources.

Delahunt and state Sen. Robert O'Leary spoke out against the proposal at the hearing, noting the state's long history of trying to protect the sound from any major development.

Island resident and world-recognized historian and author David McCullough, sporting a "Save Our Sound" sticker to ad-

U.S. Rep. William Delahunt, D-Mass., speaks out against the wind farm proposal last night at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, noting the long history the state has in trying to protect Nantucket Sound from any major development. An opponent to the wind farm, Pamela Danforth of Craigville, stands at the auditorium entry with her signs.

RON SCHLOERB/Cape Cod Times

The hearings

■ **7 tonight at the Mattacheese Middle School** at 400 Higgins-Crowell Road in West Yarmouth; registration begins at 6 p.m.

■ **6 p.m. tomorrow at the Nantucket Community School**, 10 Surfside Road, in the Mary P. Walker Auditorium on Nantucket; registration begins at 5 p.m.

■ **7 p.m. Dec. 16 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology** in Room 10-250, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge; registration begins at 6 p.m.

vertise his opposition to the proposal, did not speak at the hearing, but listened to several speakers before leaving.

"I am absolutely opposed to the project. I'm against it because it's ugly," he said.

Joy Lapsertis, a marine biologist from Falmouth, said she was "shocked and appalled" by opponents of the proposal. She urged approval of the wind farm for the sake of the environment.

Reactions to draft report

The Corps is holding hearings to gauge public reaction to its draft environmental impact statement, a 4,000-page, four-volume document that is supposed to evaluate the environmental consequences, both good and bad, of a proposal before deciding whether or not to issue a permit.

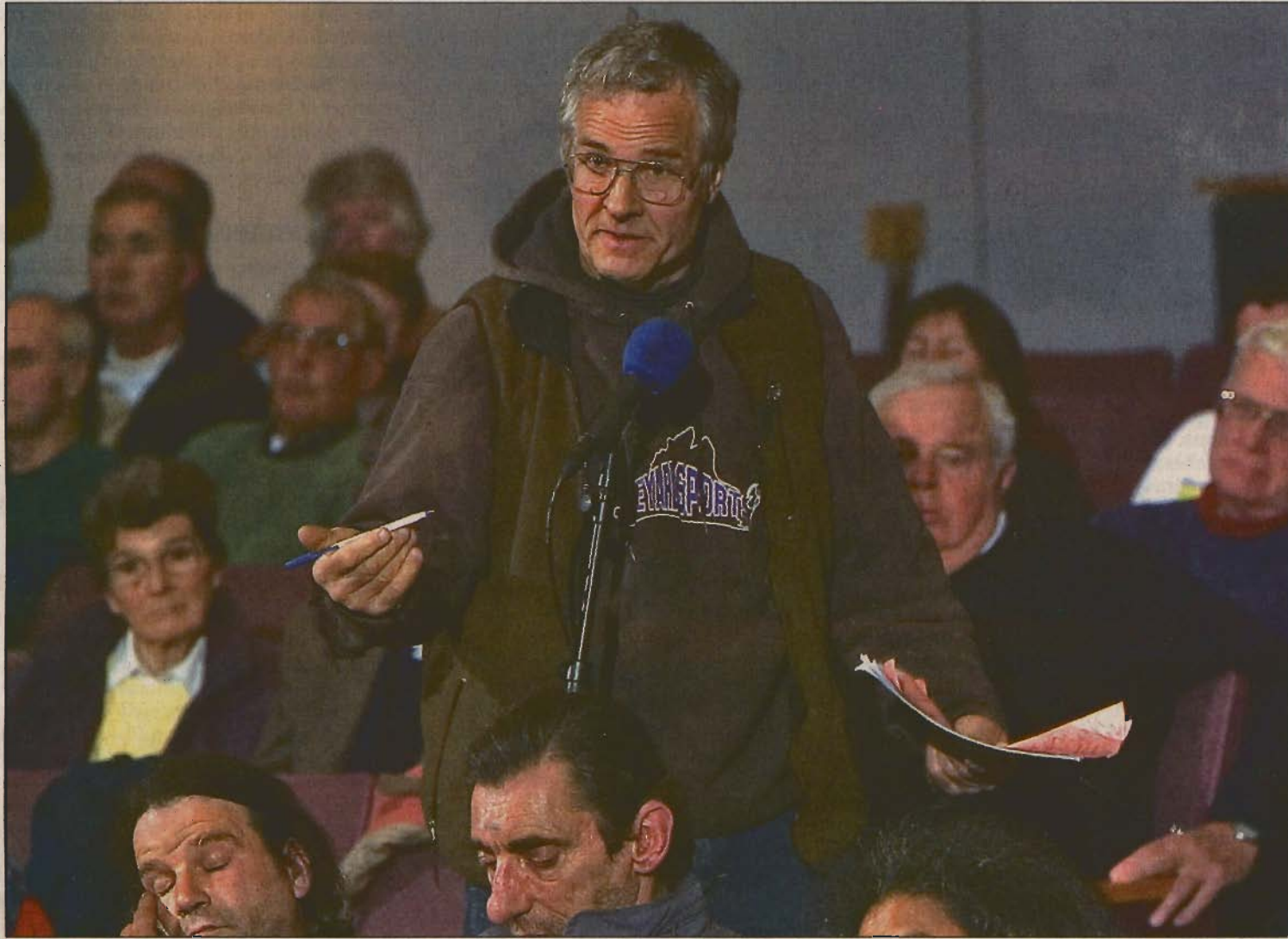
The draft, released in October, makes no firm conclusions,

but its preliminary findings do indicate that there may be more reason to approve the project at this point in the review than to deny the permit.

Among other things, the draft report found no substantial environmental problems from the wind farm: relatively low estimates of bird kills, little navigational interference with boating or fishing, and no substantial interaction with marine mammals, including protected sea turtles and whales.

Project opponents, including the Cape-based Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound, will challenge many of those preliminary findings during the four public hearings this week and next. They are also expected to challenge the Corps' findings that the visual impacts from the wind farm are not seen as harming waterfront property values, as some have warned would happen.

Sparring is polite but pointed in the first hearing on the wind farm proposed on Horseshoe Shoal



RON SCHLOERB/Cape Cod Times

Nick Van Nes of West Tisbury was one of 58 people to speak up at the wind farm hearing at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.