

Facts confirm wind farm impact is minimal

By Dennis J. Duffy

In his recent op-ed column opposing the Cape Wind project ("An ill wind off Cape Cod," The Register, Jan 12), Robert F. Kennedy Jr. relies upon factual assertions that are inconsistent with the record, including both the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released by the Army Corps of Engineers after three years of careful scientific study, and the recent decision of the Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting Board.

While Mr. Kennedy alleges impacts upon fishing, the DEIS confirms that, based on the factual record, "the project is not anticipated to have significant impacts on commercial fishing activities currently occurring in the vicinity."

While he asserts that tourism will be harmed, the DEIS concludes that, "as evidenced by experiences at other wind farms, the project will likely have a negligible effect on the use of recreational resources and a positive effect on tourism in general."

While he asserts that the wind turbines would be audible on shore, the extensive acoustical studies of the DEIS indicate that sound would be below the threshold of human hearing, such that "no noise impacts are anticipated at any onshore locations."

While he suggests dire consequences for migrating songbirds and ducks, the DEIS in fact concludes that the project would not result in "a significant adverse impact affecting population sizes of any bird species."

While he raises concerns over cost, the

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Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting Board has approved Cape Wind's application, after an exhaustive proceeding, based upon the findings that its power is needed and that "operation of the wind farm would provide average annual savings of \$25 million for New England customers."

While he also objects to placing renewable energy projects on public lands (the commons), the recent Federal Energy Policy Act indicates otherwise, by expressly stating the "sense of Congress" that the Secretary of Interior should approve 10,000 megawatts of non-hydro renewable energy projects on federal lands.

And while he asserts that new technologies could allow the project to be moved to deep water sites far offshore (presumably out of sight from the exclusive waterfront estates), the DEIS determined that such alternatives were not feasible in the conditions of the North Atlantic, and that the Cape Wind proposal is consistent with "accepted industry guidelines that define the limits of currently available and technically proven" alternatives.

It must also be noted that RFK neglects to make any mention of energy policy. The critical fact is that New England faces a serious energy crisis and the threat of rolling blackouts, with the region's elec-

tric grid operator (ISO-New England) warning of the "urgent need" for new generation sources and calling for greater fuel diversity and the "aggressive" development of renewable energy projects like Cape Wind. One is left to wonder how RFK, who also opposes nuclear and fossil options, would address New England's growing energy needs?

And with respect to global warming, RFK's own employer, the National Resources Defense Council, regards Cape Wind as "the largest single source of supply-side reductions in CO2 currently proposed in the United States, and perhaps the world."

The United States Department of Energy has similarly stated that "projects like Cape Wind are responsive to the administration's policy to increase renewable energy on public lands and to reduce air emissions in collaboration with the private sector."

Every major energy project involves the balancing of competing interests, and Cape Wind is no exception. The critical point, however, is that such balancing should be based upon the facts, and not unsupportable and alarmist assertions. We are confident that the factual record will confirm that the public benefits from Cape Wind far outweigh the relatively minor adverse impacts.

Dennis J. Duffy is vice president of Cape Wind Associates. Cape Wind's complete response to Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s commentary can be found at <http://www.capewind.org/article108.htm>.

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