

Young puts spin on turbines

■ In letter, Alaska Republican urges colleagues to restrict siting of wind farms.

By **KEVIN DENNEHY**
and **DAVID SCHOETZ**
STAFF WRITERS

A letter obtained by the Cape Cod Times removes any doubt that an Alaska congressman is behind efforts to kill the Nantucket Sound wind farm.

In a five-page letter dated Feb. 15, U.S. Rep. Don Young urges colleagues to support an amendment to an \$8.7 billion Coast Guard authorization bill that would ban wind turbines within 1½ miles of shipping and ferry lanes.

Citing British studies, the Alaska Republican predicts that ill-placed offshore wind turbines could jeopardize public safety and national security. And in great detail, Young describes the Cape Wind project - a 130-turbine proposal in the shallow waters of Nantucket Sound.

"Nothing shows the need for my navigational safety standards amendment better than the proposed Cape Wind project," Young wrote to members of a congressional conference poised to debate the Coast Guard bill in coming weeks.

"I know others oppose the project entirely on a wide variety of economic, environmental and tourism standards. ... I am convinced we need a set of objective navigational safety standards that will assure that wind energy projects are properly sited."

The letter sheds some light on Young's ongoing efforts to push the amendment.

While rumors of the legisla-

Excerpts from U.S. Rep. Don Young's letter to colleagues



"NOTHING SHOWS THE NEED FOR MY NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS AMENDMENT BETTER THAN THE PROPOSED CAPE WIND PROJECT."

"I KNOW OTHERS OPPOSE THE PROJECT ENTIRELY ON A WIDE VARIETY OF ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOURISM STANDARDS. ... I AM CONVINCED WE NEED A SET OF OBJECTIVE NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS THAT WILL ASSURE THAT WIND ENERGY PROJECTS ARE PROPERLY SITED."

tion have floated around Washington since early December, Young's staff has refused to discuss the amendment. Just last week, a Young spokesman in Washington, D.C., professed little knowledge of the issue even as the Feb. 15 letter was being crafted.

For the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound, the group trying to kill the wind farm, the letter was satisfying. Alliance leaders have pushed for just such an amendment in Washington meetings - including with Young.

"The element of satisfaction is that Don Young has taken the time to understand the issues and present them to his colleagues," said Charles Vinick, CEO of the Alliance.

Cape Wind officials, who have been unable to get a meeting with the influential chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, called Young's arguments one-sided and factually flawed.

In a letter of his own, Cape Wind president Jim Gordon told Young he was "badly misinformed" about the project and stressed the Cape Wind proposal has been scrutinized for

four years.

"One must also question your real interest in opposing Cape Wind," Gordon wrote to Young. "Despite your assertions to the contrary, it is clear that your objective is to legislatively block the Cape Wind project, for reasons that remain unstated."

Mark Rodgers, a spokesman for Cape Wind, said the group has been trying to speak with members of the conference committee ever since they heard rumors about the Coast Guard bill amendment.

"We've tried to expose Congressman Young to other points of view," he said, "but he refuses to meet with us."

Rodgers also called the language in Young's letter "right out of the Alliance playbook."

Vinick said the Alliance has briefed Young on their arguments, but he insisted the Feb. 15 letter was written by the congressman. "A letter from Don Young is a letter by Don Young," Vinick said.

Kevin Dennehy can be reached at kdennehy@capecodonline.com. David Schoetz can be reached at dschoetz@capecodonline.com.