

State may get veto over Cape Wind

■ The governor's race could take on a new importance if Congress allows Massachusetts to decide the turbines' fate.

A provision being considered behind closed doors on Capitol Hill could change the fate of the proposed Nantucket Sound wind farm – and make the governor's race even more important.

If approved in conference committee, the provision could grant veto power over the proposed Cape Wind project to state leaders.

Among the four declared gubernatorial candidates, only Democrat **Deval Patrick** has endorsed the Cape Wind project. One candidate, independent **Christy Mihos**, also happens to be chairman of the group spending millions to kill the wind farm.

But then there's the question of **Chris Gabrieli**, a wealthy businessman and Democrat who this Thursday is expected to announce his own candidacy.

While party leaders concede Gabrieli could be a wild card in the Democratic primary, he suddenly also adds an unknown dimension to the wind farm debate.

So where does he stand on the wind farm? Actually, Gabrieli says he still wants to learn more

Political Notes

By KEVIN DENNEHY

about the project, though he said he wants the Bay State to be at the forefront of renewable energy.

"I'm really surprised by people who give (Cape Wind) blanket approval without asking for all the details," Gabrieli said the other day. "And perhaps even more surprised by the people who are more blanket opposed."

"Generally, though, I think we've got to work very hard to embrace the future and not be afraid of it."

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Incidentally, as the congressional conference committee hashes out language that could kill the wind farm as soon as today, Cape Wind will not sit by quietly.

Company officials today will hold a Boston press conference to tell the public about the "last-minute attack" by, as they put it, "the Alaska delegation."

While it was U.S. Rep. **Don Young**, the powerful Alaska Republican, who floated language that would kill all turbines within 1½ nautical miles of a shipping channel or ferry route, it was his colleague, U.S. Sen. **Ted Stevens**, R-Alaska, who apparently suggested compromise language that

would target Cape Wind specifically, according to Washington sources.

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In his new campaign Web site, Hyannis Republican **Will Crocker** promises to "bring a higher level of integrity" to the 2nd Barnstable District seat.

Demetrius Atsalis, the Hyannis Democrat who currently holds the seat, isn't sure what Crocker is referring to.

But he has an idea it is, in part, about a golf tournament Atsalis hosts each year, and which last year attracted unwelcome media attention when it was revealed that the required paperwork for a charity hadn't been filed on time – and the state GOP filed a complaint against Atsalis with the state ethics commission.

Nearly a year later, the ethics commission on March 1 finally sent a letter clearing Atsalis of any wrong-doing – a letter that was held up for months because of an "oversight," according to special investigator **Scott Cole**.

"It's comical," said Atsalis, who is seeking his sixth term on Beacon Hill. "The whole thing got tied about because of paperwork, and now this."

Atsalis plans to send out invitations for this year's tournament in the coming weeks. The paperwork

with the state is already in.

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When **Margo Fenn**, executive director of the Cape Cod Commission, finished her report at the county agency's last meeting, one of the appointed commissioners made an offer to her boss.

"We all chipped in and bought you a flak jacket," joked **Susan Kadar** of Truro.

All kidding aside, the heat is on the commission. In addition to two internal reviews, the county commissioners will hand-pick a 15-person "independent" panel to scrutinize the county land use agency.

Also mobilizing to strip the commission of its power is a group of local politicians and businessmen, led by Barnstable airport commissioner **Larry Wheatley** and Barnstable Town Council president **Henry "Hank" Farnham**.

Some in attendance were state Rep. Atsalis, D-Hyannis, County Commissioner **William Doherty** and **Taylor White**, aide to state Rep. **Jeffrey Perry**, R-Sandwich.

Fenn wasn't invited.

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