

FAA to probe turbines' risk to radar

■ The agency will act after Britain cites an impact on air traffic control.

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

Concerned about findings in the United Kingdom, the Federal Avia-

tion Administration will conduct its own evaluation into the effects of wind turbines on air traffic control systems.

In an April 10 letter to U.S. Rep. William Delahunt, the Cape's congressman and a Cape Wind opponent, the head of the FAA affirmed the agency's concerns about wind turbines.

Studies conducted by the British

military last year found that turbine blades can produce "hole(s) in detection" in air defense radar systems, at times causing aircraft to become obscured from view.

Delahunt's office released the letter last night, a day before wind farm advocates plan to stage a Washington, D.C., press conference pressuring federal lawmakers to defeat a controversial provision in an \$8.7 billion Coast

Guard bill that could kill the project.

"The results of these trials/studies seem to confirm our concern of potential interference from wind turbines to our own air traffic control radar systems," Marion C. Blakely, administrator of the FAA, wrote to Delahunt.

The letter, which does not specifically name the Nantucket Sound project, cites a March 2 meeting where the U.S. leaders were briefed

by a representative from the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence about the effects of wind turbines on radar there.

Among the participants during that meeting were the FAA, various military branches and the Department of Interior, the lead agency reviewing the proposal by Cape Wind Associ-

Please see **RADAR /A-6**

Radar: Turbines will be evaluated

continued from A-1

ates to build 130 turbines in Nantucket Sound.

In recent months, Delahunt urged federal leaders to conduct such research.

Delahunt staff members said yesterday they were not aware of any specific time frame or studies. "But now that they've notified a member of Congress, it will begin in earnest," said Steven Broderick, a Delahunt spokesman.

The U.S. military has been quiet about its recent investigation into the impact of wind turbines on radar. But the FAA recently froze a permit for a wind park in Wisconsin until the Air Force is sure the turbines will not interfere with a nearby radar station.

In May, the British Ministry of Defence will conduct further trials on the effects wind turbines have on air traffic control, Julian Chafer, head of safeguarding for the Defence Estates, said in a recent e-mail

to the Times.

While the technology doesn't exist to minimize impacts, he said the government "is confident that technical solutions can be found to address the issues identified in the reports."

Cape Wind officials repeatedly have said they received approvals from both the FAA and the U.S. Air Force. A 2004 FAA letter said there was "no hazard" to aviation, while a 2004 letter from the Air Force said the Nantucket Sound project would not threaten the PAVE PAWS radar station in Sagamore.

Reached last night, Cape Wind developer Jim Gordon said he had not seen the FAA's letter to Delahunt. But, he added, "If there are any concerns, they will be carefully looked at as part of the environmental review."

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

Wind farm supporters to contest legislation

In Washington today, supporters of the proposed Nantucket Sound wind farm will launch a last-ditch campaign to spare the project from federal legislation that could doom it.

A coalition of environmental, financial and labor leaders will urge Congress to reject a "back-room amendment" that would give the Bay State governor final say over Cape Wind's plan to build a wind farm on the Sound.

Gov. Mitt Romney and most of the candidates looking to succeed him have opposed the renewable energy project.

The legislative provision, which could be considered as soon as next week, was tucked into a massive \$8.7 billion Coast Guard reauthorization bill. Already, some Senate leaders,

including the ranking members of the Senate energy committee, have denounced it.

Cape Wind officials say it would not just kill their hopes of building the nation's first offshore wind farm on Nantucket Sound, but have a chilling effect on the emerging renewable energy industry.

Among those expected to speak during a 10 a.m. press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. are Cape Wind president Jim Gordon, Katherine Kennedy of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Ted Roosevelt IV, a managing partner of Lehman Brothers, the investment bank retained by Cape Wind to line up financing for the project.

**- KEVIN DENNEHY
and DAVID SCHOETZ**