

Senators clash over wind farm

Associated Press

May 7, 2006

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration and two influential senators weighed in Friday against a provision that would block a 130-turbine wind farm off Cape Cod, where some of Washington's most powerful have vacation retreats.

The wind farm has been a focus of controversy for five years. Developers won favorable environmental reviews and hoped to have it completed in 2009.

A provision tucked into a bill authorizing U.S. Coast Guard activities would give the governor of Massachusetts a veto over the project, although the turbines would be located in federal waters. Gov. Mitt Romney opposes the project.

Energy Undersecretary David Garman called the provision "unwise" at a time when President Bush and many members of Congress are trying to spur the development of wind turbines as an alternative for generating electricity.

The Republican chairman and the ranking Democrat of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee vowed to block the bill unless the provision is removed.

Sens. Pete V. Domenici and Jeff Bingaman, said interfering in the project in this way would have a chilling effect on investments in renewable energy.

Sen. Ted Stevens, an Alaska Republican, added the provision during negotiations with the House on a final version of the Coast Guard bill.

Stevens consulted with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, whose family retreat is eight miles from the proposed wind farm. Kennedy and other members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation oppose the project, but he has denied that personal considerations are involved.

Cape Wind estimates that the wind turbines would be able to supply three-fourths of the electricity used on Cape Cod and on the nearby islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

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