

# The Republican.

## Focus on big picture for 'wind farm' plan

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If Cape Wind Associates had its way, a walk on the beach wouldn't be a walk on the beach.

It would be a science project. Or a lesson in how not to do things, in poor public policy. It would be an opportunity to reflect upon a past that had been plundered in the name of progress.

Cape Wind Associates wants to construct a so-called "wind farm" in Nantucket Sound. But such language does not in any way convey the destruction that would come from the project.

Cape Wind Associates wants to build 130 giant turbine towers just a few miles off shore, in the pristine waters around Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The gigantic plan portends gigantic problems. Tourists and residents of the area, pleasure boaters and fishermen, bird lovers and those who care about the Bay State's ecosystem - that is just the beginning of a list of those who have good reason to oppose Cape Wind's plans for the waters of the sound.

Putting the project into perspective is more important than ever now that a manager of the region's electrical grid has begun to fight for the giant turbines.

A congressional conference committee last month gave Gov. W. Mitt Romney - or his successor - authority to veto plans for the wind towers in the sound. The Coast Guard commandant would also have authority to sink the plans if they were deemed a navigational hazard.

That makes good sense. The state's chief executive ought to have authority over a corporate plan to despoil the waters off our shores. And the head of the Coast Guard must be in a similar position.

Those in charge of New England's electrical grid might reasonably be assumed to focus - as they should - on power generation and distribution. A proposal that would create more electricity would be likely to receive a thumbs up from the grid masters simply because it would make for more power to go around the region.

So it should come as no surprise that a manager of ISO New England has appealed to federal lawmakers to reconsider their recent actions that give veto power to the governor and head of the Coast Guard.

That must not be changed. Decisions about the wind turbine plan must rest with those who are looking at the big picture, not at electricity alone.