

## **OUR VIEW: Bring viable wind project to Buzzards Bay**

It was a matter of time before someone would propose harvesting wind power in breezy Buzzards Bay.

Much like Nantucket Sound, the bay has steady and reliable winds and fairly shallow waters. Both assets are needed to keep down costs of wind farm construction, maintenance and hookup to the power grid. The bay also has space that's needed between each turbine and that isn't available, as easily, on the built up and expensive coastline.

As time goes on, it is likely that wind developers will propose similar projects in bays and estuaries right down the East Coast.

Massachusetts, with very high power costs and a state policy that requires power companies to buy a percentage of green power, is now one of the most attractive places for wind power development.

Contractor Jay Cashman's proposal to erect 120 turbines in three parts of Buzzards Bay, off Sconticut Neck in Fairhaven, off Barney's Joy in Dartmouth, and off Naushon Island, must obviously go through a battery of federal, state and local reviews to be sure the turbines do not harm the environment, including the endangered roseate terns, or interfere with shipping, commercial and recreational fishing, ferry services, recreational boating and swimming.

For the same reasons that we have supported the wind turbines in Nantucket Sound, we support a viable and environmentally sensitive wind power project in Buzzards Bay.

Coal entrepreneur William Koch, an outspoken opponent of Cape Wind's Nantucket Sound proposal and a property owner on Nantucket Sound, argued on Wednesday's opinion page that the costs of putting up a fossil fuel burning plant would be lower than the Cape Wind proposal and power would be cheaper for the consumer. However, Mr. Koch did not include several of the major costs of continuing to run fossil fuel plants.

The carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels — coal, oil and natural gas — are contributing to the warming of our environment around the globe. That brings with it weather changes that we've all become too familiar with, including hotter summers, shorter winters and more extreme weather events such as ice storms, stronger hurricanes and seemingly unceasing rain. The increased rain in some areas may be connected to the scientific prediction that a warmer atmosphere speeds up the hydrologic cycle — faster cycles of evaporation and rainfall.

There is no way to simplify the thousands of other effects of climate change that have already taken a toll on humans and the natural environment and are expected to accelerate in the future if we do nothing to curb emissions. The heating of the planet is even cited as a major security risk in international

studies because it is linked to droughts, the spread of deserts, coastal destruction, mass migrations and wars.

The other cost that is not factored in when opponents of offshore wind such as Mr. Koch speak is the local cost from breathing power plant emissions. Sulfur dioxide emissions from these plants impair breathing, contribute to respiratory illness and aggravate heart and lung disease.

The third cost that is not included when people argue that offshore wind is more costly than fossil fuel burning is the cost of continued dependence on foreign oil. In order for the United States to secure a continued supply of oil to feed what President Bush called our national "addiction," we will remain entangled in costly wars in the most troubled region of the world.

Wind power along our coast is an important way to stop that addiction that is harming our health locally, damaging our planet and robbing us of too many young men and women on the battlefield.

These high costs must be honestly factored in as we weigh the economics of sticking with fossil fuels or making a significant investment in wind power and several other energy alternatives.