

# Frank backs building of coastal wind farms

By Craig Salters/ csalters@cnc.com

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In a recent letter to constituents, U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Newton, offered support for the installation of wind turbines off the coast of Massachusetts.

The congressman also labeled "a mistake" his earlier stance in favor of giving Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney or any future governor veto power over a controversial plan to construct 130 wind turbines on Nantucket Sound.

That initial decision to support a gubernatorial veto came not from opposition to the proposed wind farm, Frank said, but from deference to his colleagues, U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy, D-Massachusetts, and U.S. Rep. Bill Delahunt, D-Quincy, who both oppose Cape Wind Associates' plan for an offshore wind farm.

"I now believe that this was a mistake," wrote Frank, who told constituents that he had sought Kennedy and Delahunt's help on matters critical to his district such as the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals.

The language in a Coast Guard authorization bill, which would have given Romney veto power over Cape Wind, has since been dropped.

Regarding both Cape Wind's plan to build a wind farm in federal waters and a more recent proposal by Boston developer Jay Cashman to construct a wind farm in state waters in Buzzards Bay, Frank wrote: "I am in favor in principle of wind power and I believe that putting facilities off the southern coast of Massachusetts makes a great deal of sense.

"I now believe there is no significant basis for the argument that these entities will do undue damage to birds, nor do I think they will interfere with fishing, if done correctly."

Frank acknowledged the aesthetic concerns of many but said those concerns do not outweigh the environmental significance of the projects.

Frank said that navigational concerns, particularly in Buzzards Bay, are a high priority.

"I do believe that care must be taken to make sure that there is not significant interference with navigation," wrote Frank. "That is a matter for the experts in this area and I think we should now agree to leave specific siting decisions to these navigational experts."