

Kerry: U.S. must wean itself off Mideast oil

By **DAVID KIBBE**

TIMES BOSTON BUREAU

BOSTON - U.S. Sen. John Kerry yesterday called for a nationwide energy policy that embraces ideas like wind power and hybrid cars to wean America off Middle East oil.

"We can't respond to climate change, and we can't wage and win a real war on terror if we don't at last take bold, real steps toward energy independence," Kerry told a crowd of environmentalists, politicians and other guests at Faneuil Hall.

"For too long," he said, "we have allowed fundamental problems in the Middle East to fester by signaling corrupt Arab regimes that we don't care what they do so long as they keep the oil flowing."

His speech, billed as a major public policy address on energy, did not mention the proposed Nantucket Sound wind farm or a new proposal for up to 120 wind turbines in Buzzards Bay.

On the Cape Wind project, Kerry continues to reserve judgment. His spokeswoman, April Boyd, said the senator is waiting until the final studies on the wind farm are complete.

"John Kerry has said we need to wait and see what the environmental impact statement says about the project," Boyd said. "He would say the same about any energy project. When the process is complete, he will read what they have to say and make a decision."

Massachusetts' senior senator, Edward Kennedy, opposes the wind farm and supported an amendment in a Coast Guard spending bill that would have allowed Gov. Mitt Romney - another opponent of the wind farm - to veto it.

Kerry, who highlighted efforts during his career to curb acid rain and global warming, called for wind power to be a part of the nation's new energy mix. With only 3 percent of the world's oil reserves in this country, "there is simply no way to drill our way out of this crisis," Kerry said.

Kerry, who lost the 2004 presidential election to President Bush and is a possible Democratic candidate in 2008, called the energy bill passed by the Republican Congress "a monstrosity with no guiding national goal, no tough decisions, no change in priorities - just a logrolling, back-scratching collection of subsidies for any industry with the clout to get a seat at the table and a share of the pork."

Kerry said he would file legislation in Washington that called for three major changes:

- Reversing and stopping emissions that cause global warming by freezing the level of greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 and decreasing them by 65 percent by 2050.
- Reducing oil consumption by 2.5 million barrels a day by 2015, which is equivalent to the

amount the United States imports from the Persian Gulf. The plan would promote renewable energy, raise fuel economy standards, mandate that all cars be able to run on ethanol blends by 2020, offer tax credits to convert factories to electric hybrid cars, eliminate tax breaks for SUVs that are used solely as passenger vehicles, and mandate that gas stations affiliated with major oil companies have at least one ethanol pump by 2010. With the proper tax credits, Kerry said 20 percent of the nation's cars could be hybrids by 2010.

– Developing new energy technologies by doubling federal funding for research and development. Kerry would eliminate tax breaks for oil companies to create a \$20 billion Energy Security and Conservation Trust Fund for new technology.

Kerry said the country had the ability to change, but needed support and encouragement from government.

"In fact, we've been here before," he said. "One hundred and fifty years ago in Massachusetts, in New Bedford and Nantucket, no one could conceive of a future that didn't depend on whale oil. "I Across our history, we've successfully moved from wood to coal, coal to oil, oil to a mix of oil, gas, coal, nuclear and hydroelectric.

"Now it's time to move to solar, wind, biomass, fuel cells, clean coal, and other wonders of American ingenuity, and I believe Washington must lead the marketplace in the right direction."

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(Published: June 27, 2006)

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