

Massachusetts Cape Wind Project

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Later on this autumn, the U.S. Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) is scheduled to release a draft report on the environmental impact of the Cape Wind project. The Cape Wind project is an ambitious plan to build a wind farm consisting of 130 wind turbines off the coast of Massachusetts, costing around \$1 billion. The proposed installation will be able to supply enough electricity for around 454,000 homes or roughly three-quarters of the electricity requirements of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Looking at it from a climate change perspective, it all seems like a great idea, producing electricity from renewable energy to help reduce the U.S.'s carbon emissions is something everyone should be able to agree on.

But, there's a problem here. The local people and environmentalists are against the wind farm. I have written about a similar situation on the Greek Island of Skyros and Whinash in the UK. In both of these cases, the local population and environmentalists have come together to lobby against the proposed wind farms. Wind farms are great on paper, and they're great in practice too, but the prevailing attitude is "Not in my backyard." Yes, the things are ugly, and yes, they do spoil an otherwise beautiful coastline or country area, and yes they do impact adversely on the local wildlife, but they could help save the planet. Wind farms are an effective way to produce electricity without burning fossil fuels and without producing significant amounts of carbon emissions. Until we have a better alternative, it may be a case of having to choose the lesser of two evils.

This particular project has run into some serious opposition, with the likes of Sen. Ted Kennedy and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney joining the other local residents in opposing the project. Environmental groups are worried about the impact on migratory birds and local sea life, and fisherman are concerned about negotiating their way around the project with their drag-nets, while for some its simply a case of having the view from their houses compromised. With this kind of opposition, I would imagine it will become difficult to get the project off the ground.

The final decision rests with MMS, the body that has federal authority over the project. The director of MMS has said the draft report will be issued around autumn time and will be followed by public meetings later in the year. Their final decision is expected in second quarter of next year.

Source: [Reuters](#)