

Luly E. Massaro, Commissioner Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

RE: Review of Proposed Town of New Shoreham Project
Pursuant to RI General Laws 39-26.1-7
PUC Docket No. 4111

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

November 3, 2009

Dear Ms. Massaro:

We are writing to you regarding a proposal that is now before the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission concerning the proposed Deepwater Wind project off the southeast point of Block Island (New Shoreham).

As owners of property on the east side of Block Island, we oppose the project for several economic and environmental reasons and believe these reasons should be considered in the commission's decision on the Deepwater Wind proposal.

No one will argue that Block Island has one of the highest costs for electric power in the country. In fact, the island could probably benefit from a cable to the mainland to allow it access to the grid. Unfortunately, the current proposal by Deepwater Wind has not clearly enumerated what the cost of such a cable installation would be. However, it appears that the company has added proposed capacity into this cable for more than double the power that would be generated by eight wind turbines.

The objection that we have to the proposed Deepwater Wind project is that it will adversely affect the island's primary industry of tourism. Block Island is a tourist attraction because of its pristine beauty and natural setting. This will no longer be the case if eight wind turbines are constructed offshore.

The most popular attraction on Block Island is the Southeast Lighthouse situated atop the Mohegan bluffs. It is attractive because of its natural state, unique features and unspoiled location. The Deepwater Wind project would place eight wind turbines less than 3 miles offshore from this lighthouse. The wind turbines would be 450 foot structures that would tower over the bluffs, which are only 150 feet high. In fact, these turbines would tower over the lighthouse itself, which is only 52 feet high. These turbines will be visible in panoramic splendor to all who visit the island.

Block Island attracts more than 60 weddings per year, bringing revenues of \$25,000 to \$100,000 per event. The prime location for wedding pictures is at the Southeast Lighthouse. Additionally, three of the island hotels which host the majority of these wedding events are in the line of sight of the proposed wind farm. Weddings parties can choose to go to the Rhode Island mainland, Massachusetts or Connecticut where most of the participants live -- and Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard are certainly viable alternatives to Block Island.

Approximately 100 of the island's homes and more than 50 percent of the rental rooms for tourists are on the east and southeast side of Block Island. Another 20 building lots remain to be developed in this same area. What will this wind farm do to their view sheds and what will the financial fallout be?

One of the major sailboat races is the Storm Trysail race, which brings more than 300 boats and their accompanying crew to the island biennially. The highlight of this event is a race around the island. This race would be severely impacted with boats tacking through the eight turbines which would now become part of the course. Not to mention the accompanying fog horns and aircraft warning lights that would be located on these eight turbines. Does Deepwater Wind realize that the south and southeast sides are the foggiest parts of the island?

When tourism is adversely impacted, many other industries suffer in kind. Not only will restaurants, hotels and retail shops see the decline, but also real estate agencies and construction companies. Who will buy, build or renovate properties in a location that has lost its luster?

The demise of a major tourist attraction and corresponding lost revenue will have a fiscal impact on the State of Rhode Island through lower sales tax, hotel tax, and real estate tax revenue – not to mention the corresponding job losses from the respective industries. Will the jobs created by a wind turbine manufacturing facility at Quonset Point, as touted by Governor Carcieri, offset the massive job loss on Block Island?

The legislature appears to have wanted certain factors considered when it asked the Public Utility Commission to consider the electric reliability and environmental quality of the Town of New Shoreham. This is why we bring these matters to your attention.

We have reviewed all of the intervener filings in this docket and unfortunately no one has indicated an interest in Block Island's economic or environmental well being as it relates to this project. There are a significant number of people on the island whose opposition to this wind farm are not being represented by any of our elected officials on a local or state level. This is why we respectfully ask the commission to consider our position.

Sincerely,



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