

April 28, 2010

Cape Wind Timeline

- November 2001: Cape Wind seeks permission from the U.S. Army Corps to construct the Cape Wind project
- December 2001: Army Corps determines that an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for the Cape Wind Project and commences the environmental review process
- October 2002: Political opposition to the project in Washington heats up as Sen. John Warner (R-VA) attempts, unsuccessfully, to prevent Cape Wind from erecting data tower in Nantucket Sound.
- Summer 2004: Then Governor Mitt Romney attempts to turn project into state issue by claiming rocks above sea level in Nantucket Sound extend border of Massachusetts into wind farm area. Cape Wind relocates planned positions of turbines into federal waters.
- October 2004: Warner attaches amendment to Congressional defense appropriations bill in conference committee prohibiting Army Corps of Engineers from spending money on permitting any offshore wind projects. National attention forces Warner to withdraw amendment.
- November 2004: Army Corps of Engineers issues Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public comment; over 5,000 public comments are received.
- Summer 2005: Following the enactment of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Department of Interior is given authority to issue leases for renewable energy projects on the Outer Continental Shelf (“OCS”). DOI’s Minerals Management Service becomes the lead agency for the Cape Wind project and recommences the environmental review process.
- Fall 2005: Rep. Young (R-AK), attaches amendment to Coast Guard Reauthorization Act in conference committee to prohibit any offshore wind farm within 1.5 nautical miles of a shipping channel or ferry route.

Amendment later reworded to give the governor of Massachusetts the power to veto Cape Wind. Congressional battle continues until June 2006, when amendment is reworded to provide minor changes in Coast Guard's role reviewing offshore wind energy projects.

- March 2006: Mass Audubon issues Cape Wind Challenge to Cape Wind and its permitting agencies to accept comprehensive and rigorous monitoring and mitigation conditions that will reduce the risk to birds and other wildlife.
- January 2008: Draft Environmental Impact Statement issued by MMS. MMS holds public hearings on the Draft EIS in Boston, West Yarmouth, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. MMS receives over 42,000 public comments.
- January 2009: MMS issues an 800-page Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS"), with lengthy appendices. FEIS findings show that the project's benefits will outweigh its impacts.
- November 2009: Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer finds that Nantucket Sound is eligible for listing on the National Historic Register as a "Traditional Cultural Property"; Acting Keeper of the National Historic Register agrees, in a finding released in January 2010.
- January 2010: MMS issues an amended finding under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act stating that the Project is anticipated to have some impacts on historic and cultural viewsheds, but notes that these impacts have been largely mitigated and rejects concept of relocating project.
- January 2010: Secretary Salazar states that he will try to engage stakeholders to seek a consensus resolution among the "consulting" parties involved in National Historic Preservation Act review of Cape Wind by March 1st; if none is reached, he will issue a final decision on the project by the end of April.
- March 1, 2010: Secretary Salazar terminated the consultation process, finding that the stakeholders were unlikely to reach agreement on the Project. He requested the comments of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the Project's historic and cultural impacts.

- March 4, 2010: MMS releases an Environmental Assessment that analyzes new information and changes in circumstances in the year since the FEIS was issued, and finds that no Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is required.
- April 2, 2010: the ACHP issues a negative opinion regarding the Project, and asks Secretary Salazar not to approve it. The ACHP's findings are not binding on the Secretary.