



**RELEASE OF FEDERAL CAPE WIND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IS
A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD**

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LINCOLN, Mass.— After seven years, the release of the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Mineral Management Service’s Cape Wind Energy Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), is a positive step forward for offshore renewable energy in Massachusetts and the nation. Mass Audubon is conducting a detailed review of the FEIS, including, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Biological Opinion. We note that the Opinion is consistent with Mass Audubon’s interpretation of three years of our avian research and our reviews of previous impact statements on this project.

Mass Audubon’s support for the Cape Wind Project has been contingent on satisfactory resolution of key policy and biological issues that were identified in our Cape Wind Challenge (March 2006). Our preliminary assessment of field data and the relevant literature at that time led us to tentatively conclude that the project would not pose an ecologically significant threat to birds and associated marine habitat and most of the conditions of our Challenge have been satisfactorily addressed.

Because the roseate tern is a federally listed endangered species and is already at some risk of extinction, Mass Audubon has consistently recommended that remaining uncertainty in the assessment of risk to roseate terns be reduced.

“The benefits and detriments of Cape Wind must be balanced against the known and ecologically significant threats to Nantucket Sound posed by fossil-fuel use and rapid climate warming,” says Mass Audubon President Laura Johnson.

Because of the remaining uncertainty in the environmental impacts of the first major offshore wind farm in North America, MMS should require a strong post-construction monitoring program that includes a commitment to adaptive management. Additionally, an Environmental Management System (EMS) should be completed and available for review prior to release of the Record of Decision.

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Mass Audubon will look for the following additional key points in Mass Audubon's Cape Wind Challenge to be addressed in the FEIS and the Record of Decision.

- Mitigation measures that avoid, minimize, or otherwise compensate for predicted adverse environmental impacts;
- A lease sale agreement with the federal government for use of the Outer Continental Shelf; and
- Decommissioning plan in the event the post-construction project is abandoned.

Mass Audubon has reviewed the Cape Wind Project in the context of rising sea levels caused by rapid climate change that threaten low-lying barrier beaches and islands. These habitats are critical habitat for coastal birds, including the endangered roseate tern and threatened piping plover.

Mass Audubon's standard for the technical review and assessment of the DEIS is that the project poses **no ecologically significant threat** to living resources. This standard does not mean zero impact on those resources because we realize that the production of energy always entails some level of environmental impact. We also acknowledge that there will be a certain level of risk to the living resources of Nantucket Sound posed by the construction, operation, and eventual dismantling of the Cape Wind Energy Project.

Mass Audubon works to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. Together with more than 100,000 members, we care for 33,000 acres of conservation land, provide educational programs for 200,000 children and adults annually, and advocate for sound environmental policies at the local, state, and federal levels. Mass Audubon's mission and actions have expanded since our beginning in 1896 when our founders set out to stop the slaughter of birds for use on women's fashions. Today we are the largest conservation organization in New England. Our statewide network of 45 wildlife sanctuaries welcomes visitors of all ages and serves as the base for our conservation, education, and advocacy work. To support these important efforts, call 800-AUDUBON (283-8266) or visit www.massaudubon.org.

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