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New England District

News release

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Corps extends public comment period on wind energy project Draft EIS by 45 days

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is extending the public comment period by 45 days for review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement addressing the proposed Cape Wind wind energy project in Nantucket Sound, Mass.

The extension, made by the Corps' New England District Commander and District Engineer Col. Thomas Koning, was in response to requests to provide more time to review the document. Extension requests came from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Cape Cod Commission, and Rep. William Delahunt, as well as others. The 105-day comment period will now end on Feb. 24, 2005.

The Corps released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed wind energy project on Nov. 9.

The Draft EIS was prepared by the Corps, in cooperation with 16 federal, state and local resource agencies, in response to a permit application from Cape Wind Associates, LLC for the installation and operation of 130 offshore wind turbine generators in Nantucket Sound, Mass. The document also serves as the Environmental Impact Report for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act and for the review by the Cape Cod Commission.

The purpose of the Draft EIS is to assess the environmental impacts associated with the proposed construction of an offshore wind-powered generating facility by Cape Wind Associates in Nantucket Sound. The Draft EIS provides detailed information on the potential impacts and benefits of the applicant's proposed wind energy project in Nantucket Sound and potential impacts and benefits at the alternative sites.

Cape Wind Associates LLC applied to the Corps for a permit to construct an offshore wind energy facility in November 2001. The purpose is to generate up to 454 MW of clean, renewable wind-generated energy that will be transmitted to the New England regional power grid, including Cape Cod and the Islands.

The purpose of the extension is to allow the local, state and federal permit processes to be synchronized as much as possible. The Corps' EIS, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, is one of many processes that must be implemented prior to a final permit decision by the Corps. These processes and decisions include those to be made by the Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting Board, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office.

The Corps encourages input and participation in the process at the local, state and federal level. The Corps and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office will hold four public hearings in December to gather input for the federal and state processes.

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Corps extends wind energy park Draft EIS comment period/2-2-2-2

Public hearings are scheduled: on Monday, Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. (registration to begin at 5 p.m.) at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School on Edgartown Road, in Oak Bluffs, Mass.; on Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. (registration to begin at 6 p.m.) at the Mattacheese Middle School at 400 Higgins-Crowell Road in West Yarmouth, Mass.; on Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. (registration to begin at 5 p.m.) at the Nantucket Community School at 10 Surfside Road in the Mary P. Walker Auditorium in Nantucket, Mass.; and on Thursday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. (registration to begin at 6 p.m.) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Room 10-250 at 77 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge, Mass.

Hard copies and CD copies of the Draft EIS are available for review at 32 local area libraries on Cape Cod, the islands, and in Boston, Mass. An electronic version of the Draft EIS is available for review and download on the Corps website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select "projects" and then Cape Wind windfarm permit application. Or go directly to: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/ccwf/windfarm.htm>

Public comments on the Draft EIS can be sent electronically to wind.energy@usace.army.mil or mailed to Cape Wind Energy Project EIS Manager Karen K. Adams, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. Reference file # NAE-2004-338-1. The public notice can be reviewed online at the Corps website at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting and search by file number or state.

A compact disc (CD) copy of the Draft EIS and a Project Summary Brochure can be requested from the above address, by emailing a request to wind.energy@usace.army.mil, or by calling 978-318-8335.

Some of the major steps in the permitting process are: the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board has to grant a license; the DEIS must fulfill NEPA requirements; the DEIR must fulfill MEPA requirements; the Cape Cod Commission (will participate in the DEIR and FEIR Review as part of the development of regional impacts process; the Local Conservation Commission (of the Towns of Barnstable and Yarmouth) must review the proposal as it relates to Wetlands Protection Act and Local Wetlands Bylaw and issue an Order of Conditions; the Massachusetts DEP must provide a Chapter 91 Waterways License, and provide a Water Quality Certification and Wetlands Superseding Order of Conditions (if local Order of Conditions is appealed); the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office must provide a Coastal Zone Consistency Review; and the Corps must provide a Section 10 permit for work in navigable waters. There are additional permits, authorizations and appeals processes not listed.