

**Policy Statement Adopted @ the Board of Directors' meeting**  
**December 1, 2004**

One of the good things that the Wind Farm debate has spawned for the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce is an interesting internal discussion about energy policy, renewable energy and the impact, if any, of local decisions on grand global environmental threats.

It is obvious that electricity from wind turbines has also struck a nerve with significant numbers of Cape residents and visitors. Letters to newspapers on the subject show strong support for energy independence and cleaner electricity from renewable sources. The letters also tend to attribute strong positive cause and effect results such as lower prices, cleaner air and near energy independence for Cape Cod.

The Chamber has looked at the issue long and hard. It is evident that this is an extremely complex industry. Electric power is generated from hundreds of sources across the six-state New England region. Fuel sources are nuclear, coal, oil, water and minute amounts of renewable sources. The planning and operation of the so called grid is done by an entity called the Independent System Operator. The 1998 Massachusetts de-regulation law essentially allows for competition in the generation of electricity while still regulating the distribution and transmission of electricity. The law allows consumers and businesses to purchase power from any source while continuing to regulate how the power gets to the user. The law also allows for aggregation by like end users. In the Cape's case, we have the only regional aggregation in New England; the Cape Light Compact. They are set up to investigate and contract for the best, least expensive, most reliable sources of electricity for the region's thousands of consumers.

When the Chamber and its affiliates began to look at the law and the generation system, it was evident that a large wind farm in Nantucket Sound had both pluses and minuses attached to it. We have our doubts about its effect on prices, air quality and energy independence; at least in the measures that the developer and his adherents expound. On the other hand, we also cringe at "the sky is falling" rhetoric of the principal opponent of the project.

In the Chamber position, we weighed the important symbolism of the project with the potential benefits to our region and came down on the side of opposition because we do not believe the case has been made for lower prices, cleaner air or electricity independence for Cape Cod.

But symbolism is still important and leadership is even more important and the Chamber is willing to organize and direct a regional effort that might be the acorn that fosters the oak tree.

Here is what we need to do as a 15 town region:

- (1) We need a comprehensive energy policy that gives state and federal agencies more authority to site off shore wind turbine generators. The public interest in sensitive coastal areas must also encompass other development threats such as ocean aquaculture, ocean dumping,

gambling boats, LNG platforms and any other fixed structure now largely unregulated.

- (2) There must be a comprehensive plan for our coastal waters that fundamentally allows for bidding procedures and lease or tax payments for the use of public property.
- (3) If a wind farm is allowed to develop, the regulators should have the authority to take out of service an older coal or oil fired generator. A trade-off with proper tax and stranded cost mitigation procedures should be in place.
- (4) We need to design a stronger conservation and energy efficiency program for our region in conjunction with the CLC.

Any development in an important public resource such as Nantucket Sound only deserves support if there is in place a credible process for evaluation and trade off mechanisms that guarantees better prices, cleaner air and energy conservation.