

February 25, 2021

By Email: MARFP83C@gmail.com

Marian Swain, Energy Policy Analyst
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge St.; Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114

***Re: Comments in Response to the Draft Request for Proposals for Long-Term
Contracts for Offshore Wind Energy Projects***

Dear Ms. Swain:

The Town of Nantucket writes in response to the request for comments issued by Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) concerning the Draft Request for Proposals for Long-Term Contracts for Offshore Wind Energy Projects (Draft RFP). Nantucket supports the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' clean energy and economic development goals. Nantucket requests—again—that DOER consider impacts to historic and cultural resources as DOER works to implement these goals, which should be included as part of the procurement review process.

Nantucket has submitted comments to DOER on previous occasions and raised the same concerns. However, it appears that DOER has not taken Nantucket's comments into account. DOER's omissions in the latest Draft RFP are especially disappointing in light of the affirmation by DOER's Renewable Energy Division Acting Director, Eric Steltzer, to Nantucket representatives on an October 23, 2019 conference call, where he expressed an appreciation for hearing Nantucket's perspectives and noted the reasonableness of the Town's previous comments urging the Commonwealth to incorporate visual impact minimization standards into future offshore wind RFPs.

Offshore wind development involves massive infrastructure installations that create substantial risk for environmental harm if appropriate conditions are not imposed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those risks. As Nantucket has requested in the past, we ask that DOER pay heightened attention to avoiding harm to the Nantucket Historic District, a National Historic Landmark, as Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act requires. As Cape Wind's failure makes clear, the RFP must include provisions that require the applicant to submit a plan on the front end explaining how the proposed wind farm will avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to historic properties and cultural resources, including all districts, properties, and sites listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Draft RFP fails to consider these issues. Visual impacts, in addition to other direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, should be part of any RFP, planning, and permitting review process conducted by DOER for all offshore wind development projects. Mark C. Kalpin of Holland & Knight highlighted some of these issues during his presentation at the Massachusetts

Offshore Wind Transmission Technical Conference on March 3, 2020.¹ DOER should take them into account. Nantucket also believes that DOER's future planning—including the Draft RFP—should consider how to maximize the sharing of energy development benefits with the communities impacted by development projects.

Nantucket has consistently supported our collective need to develop alternative clean energy sources. As a remote island, Nantucket is at the forefront of climate change and recognizes the need to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. However, as the second oldest and largest contiguous historic district in the United States, Nantucket does not believe that renewable energy development must come at the expense of a community's historic and cultural heritage. As DOER is aware, failure to adequately consider harm to historic properties and cultural resources on the front end has led to federal permitting delays. Giving greater attention to historic preservation concerns in the Draft RFP will help ensure a more efficient, effective, and successful review process for future projects.

In the pursuit of increasing its offshore wind power supply, Massachusetts must not ignore the potential harm to its irreplaceable historic places, such as Nantucket National Historic Landmark, Nantucket Sound, and the Chappaquiddick Island Tribal Cultural Property. To do so at the expense of spoiling the unique visual character and cultural heritage of these historic places will not advance the Commonwealth's goals for clean energy development, but rather impede them. To ensure Nantucket's sustainability, we must balance clean energy goals with our rich historic cultural identity. The island's past is its future and must be preserved and protected.

Finally, Nantucket urges the Commonwealth to require adherence to "best practice" standards to minimize viewshed impacts, especially on historic properties listed in the National Register of Historic Place, such as those included by the State of New York in its latest Offshore Wind RFP, in which Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS) were required and turbines located within 20-miles of shore were discouraged. In our opinion, New York has set a higher standard for siting offshore wind turbines by either avoiding or greatly minimizing adverse visual effects. We note, however, that DOER should require an even greater setback distance to avoid adverse visual effects, especially considering the trend toward significantly taller turbines. It would be unacceptable for 1100' turbines to be sited just 15 miles from some of the Commonwealth's most valuable historic landmarks and places. Therefore, it is imperative that the Commonwealth follow New York's lead in protecting its historic properties and cultural resources from the "Visibility and Viewshed Impacts" of neighboring offshore wind developments to the greatest extent possible, and include similar factors tailored for Massachusetts and its historic communities in DOER's Draft RFP.²

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and your colleagues. Thank you for considering Nantucket's comments.

¹ Mark C. Kalpin, *Legal and Regulatory Issues Associated with the Development of Offshore Wind Transmission: An Overview*, Massachusetts Offshore Wind Transmission Technical Conference (Mar. 3, 2020).

² State of New York Purchase of Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificates, Request for Proposals ORECRFP18-1 Release Date: November 8, 2018; Section 6.4.15 "Visibility and Viewshed Impacts"; <https://portal.nyscrda.ny.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pt000000Fx0rjEAB> .

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William J. Cook, Special Counsel

Tel: 843-801-3366

Email: will@culturalheritagepartners.com

cc: C. Elizabeth Gibson, Town Manager, Town of Nantucket
Holly Backus, Preservation Planner, Town of Nantucket
Lauren Sinatra, Energy Coordinator, Town of Nantucket