



Similar Wind Farm in Denmark

Cape Wind NEPA Compliance Services

Nantucket Sound, Cape Cod Area, MA

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Offshore wind facility
- First-of-a-kind project in region
- Intense stakeholder and policymaker scrutiny

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Reviewed Environmental Impact Statement on behalf of USACE
- Provided third party objective comment
- Coordinated public meetings
- Coordinated response to public comment
- Coordinated specialty socioeconomic analysis

Project Completion: 2003
Work for which firm was responsible: \$70,000

Reference:

Karen Adams
US Army Corps of Engineers,
New England District
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742
978-318-8828

The Challenge - State and federal requirements called for significant new capacity to accommodate future demand, and to enhance fuel source diversity and reliability for electric generating plants serving New England, particularly Southeastern MA, Cape Cod, and the Islands. These requirements pointed towards the siting of an offshore Wind Park in the shallow waters of scenic Nantucket Sound. Policymakers, regulators, and stakeholders alike were new to the technical and procedural issues associated with this unfamiliar project type, the first of its kind in the region. Concerns rose focused on bird strike from rotating blades, interference with maritime navigation systems, altering aesthetic resources near a National Seashore and historic communities, and marine fisheries impacts. High profile political and media personalities drew national attention to the project which increased scrutiny, exacerbated conflict, and slowed the approval process, threatening its successful completion.

The Interdisciplinary Approach - Cape Wind Associates, LLC proposed to install and operate 130 offshore wind turbine generators capable of producing maximum deliverable capacity of 468 MW of renewable energy in order to significantly advance achievement of the Mass. Renewable Portfolio Standard. The 258' high low speed turbines were selected to minimize avian impacts, were situated several miles from the shoreline, and used deep structural footings to provide stability in marine sediment conditions. On behalf of the federal NEPA review team led by the US Army Corps of Engineers, BioGroup provided independent and objective review of the Draft EIS prepared by the project proponent, and additionally arranged for and conducted public meetings and documented public comments regarding the project. Specialty socioeconomic analysis services addressing power generation policy were obtained. The voluminous and often generalized or multifaceted comments were reviewed, sorted into categories, and an organized systematic response was crafted.



Simulated Viewscape showing turbines on horizon

Analysis of potential impacts emphasized not only deleterious project effects, but also beneficial effects such as improvements to habitat resources for benthic organisms, shellfish, and finfish due to piling and tower structures.

The Sustainable Result - Supported by the systematic recognition of the Cape Wind project's program to avoid, minimize, and mitigate negative impacts, and to foster positive impacts including habitat restoration and enhancement, plus decreased reliance on fossil fuels, stakeholder support was improved and NEPA approval was granted. The NEPA review process held up under further layers of intense federal regulatory scrutiny and political challenge during an unprecedented six-year permitting cycle which concluded with comprehensive project authorization. The project provided for a utility-scale, economically efficient source of renewable power consistent with regional policy and regulatory initiatives to meet the growing demand for renewable energy sources while respecting and contributing to local recreation, habitat, and economic needs.

