

Mass. closer to siting nation's first offshore wind farm

Jan. 21 -- Massachusetts is a step closer to siting the nation's first offshore wind farm following the release of the project's final environmental impact statement.

The U.S. Minerals Management Service released a 2,800-page impact statement on the Cape Wind offshore project, Jan. 16. It concluded Horseshoe Shoal in Nantucket Sound is an environmentally and economically superior location, the project will reduce sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, mercury and carbon dioxide emissions and not increase New England energy prices.

The MMS could grant a lease to Cape Wind within 30 days. The agency will weigh the regional, state and local benefits of the project. It expressed some concerns regarding birds and the visual impact to some residences along the coastline.

Cape Wind wants to build 130 wind turbines several miles off the Massachusetts coast to generate 420 megawatts of electricity. For more than seven years, proponents and opponents have debated the pros and cons of siting windmills in Nantucket Sound.

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