

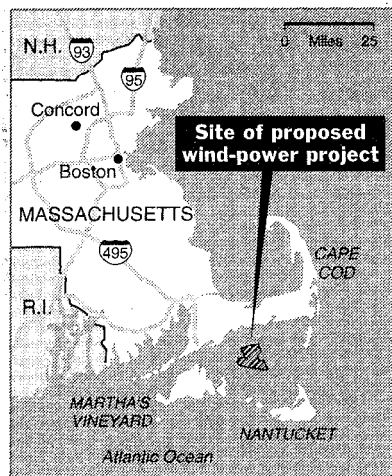
Much Heat and a Deep Split Over a Cape Cod Wind Farm

By CORNELIA DEAN

CONCORD, Mass., Jan. 11 — After four formal hearings, one so packed with passionate speakers that it had to be reconvened for a second time on Tuesday afternoon, the public has just about had its say on a proposal to install a giant wind farm in offshore waters south of Cape Cod.

But consensus appears to be as far away as ever, with advocates and opponents deeply divided on the project and the vast majority still ambivalent.

On Tuesday, the project was variously described as relying on outdated technology or as a beautiful alternative to strip mining, the equivalent of industrializing the Grand Canyon



Plans call for 130 turbines in a 24-square-mile grid off Cape Cod.

or a way to lead the nation once again to independence, this time energy independence.

"Five percent on each side are passionate," and the remaining 90 percent are unsure, Larry Rosenberg, a spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers, said at a public information session convened on Saturday by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, a state agency.

The project, put forward by Cape Wind Associates of Boston, a private concern, involves 130 turbines arranged in a grid occupying 24 square miles of Horseshoe Shoals, in Nantucket Sound. Each tower, with its turbines and blades, would reach 420 feet above the water.

Karen Adams, who supervises the permitting process for the corps of engineers, said it would be at least six or seven months before the corps made a decision on the permit. Sev-

eral state and local agencies have yet to weigh in first, Ms. Adams said, "and they all have to say yes" for the permit to be approved.

Although the session on Tuesday was the last public hearing, the public comment period has been extended through Feb. 24.

Advocates said the turbine array would ultimately produce about three-fourths of the electricity now used on Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, reducing the region's reliance on fossil fuels. That, in turn, would reduce the risk of global warming, the nation's dependence on imported oil, pollution and pollution-related diseases like asthma, they said. Others said they liked the idea of a wind farm because it would bring jobs to the region, the towers would attract fish and the wind farm might become a tourist attraction.

Opponents say that the project might be a good idea, but that Nantucket Sound is the wrong place. They note that the installation would be the first of its kind in the nation and say that it relies on unproved technology that has run into trouble elsewhere. In particular, they criticized the corps draft environmental impact study for the proposal. As is routine, it was paid for by the project applicant, Cape Wind, an arrangement that opponents said tainted its generally upbeat assessment.

Some opponents, including Senator Edward M. Kennedy, whose family compound in Hyannisport would have a view of the towers, said no projects should be approved in Horseshoe Shoals, or other federal waters, until the nation had a more coherent policy for dealing with offshore lands generally.

Two recent reports, one by the United States Commission on Ocean Policy and the other by the Pew Oceans Commission, made similar recommendations, and last month the White House announced that it would pursue the idea.

Greg Watson, a vice president at the technology collaborative, said his group had not taken a stand on the proposal, even though much of its mission involved the encouragement of renewable energy like wind.

The collaborative organized the session on Saturday "as a neutral broker," Mr. Watson said, because it was important that the public have confidence that the project, if it went forward, was being done right. Otherwise he said, "it will set back the cause of renewable energy."