



Offshore Wind has Onshore Impacts

Avangrid, Inc. spins a rosy tale about three “risk-free” offshore wind projects proposed to land in Barnstable, Massachusetts. But offshore wind has onshore impacts. Here are some risks that Avangrid does not talk about:

1. Environment. Irreversible damage to Barnstable’s beach ecosystems. Wildlife harms offshore and onshore. Piercing of the Cape’s sole fresh water aquifer. In the case of the Dowses project, structural failure of Dowses causeway. Possible pollution of Town wells. Noise and light pollution from substations. Loss of 44 acres of the Town’s green space to substations.

2. Public health and safety. Residents fear the electromagnetic radiation from a total of 2,800 megawatts of electricity coursing under Barnstable’s beaches and roadways. Excessive heat from high voltage power can cause explosions and fires in splicing vaults located beneath the beach parking lots and every ½ mile under roadways that contain adjacent natural gas pipes. Excessive heat can adversely impact drinking water in adjacent utility pipes. Explosions in splicing vaults are powerful. If one were to occur on a day when a beach parking lot is full, casualties are possible.

3. Permanent Declines in Property Values and Town Tax Revenues. Research shows that high voltage power lines cause property values to decline. In Barnstable, that will translate into lower assessments and, therefore, lower Town property tax revenues. California and Kansas courts have found that the perceived risks of electromagnetic radiation reduce property values. Visual, aural and fire risks also adversely impact values.

4. Economic Harms. Lasting damage to small businesses along 20 miles of cable routes for the three projects. Lasting harm to Barnstable’s tourism-based economy and rental market. It’s likely that future home buyers, renters and visitors to Cape Cod will avoid Barnstable because of high-voltage power lines beneath its beaches and roadways.

5. Damage to the Cape’s Electric Grid. Avangrid’s PPAs require the company to land the power. Avangrid has chosen the path that is cheapest for the company and its shareholders – not what’s best for residents, ratepayers or the environment. Even with substation upgrades, a recent Brattle Group study concludes that the current “spaghetti” approach will create instability in the Cape’s grid that will far exceed a planned transmission approach and cost consumers 200% more. Connecting new wind farms into existing under-utilized power plants that already have substantial interconnections will cut the risk to the Cape’s grid and preserve green space – all while working toward the planned approach, which will enhance system reliability.

6. Execution Risks. Offshore wind is a brand new, startup business for Avangrid. The company has never built, operated or maintained an offshore wind project. Inexperience can lead to catastrophic mistakes.

7. Structural Risks to the Town and its Residents. Each of Avangrid’s three Barnstable wind power projects is being configured as a fourth-tier limited liability company (LLC) subsidiary. The immediate corporate parent of each project LLC is...another limited liability company. In the event of an environmental, public health or economic catastrophe, the Town of Barnstable, its residents and business owners, as unsecured creditors, will have zero recourse to Avangrid, Inc. or to its Spain-domiciled parent company, Iberdrola, S.A.

Support offshore wind power! But don’t let developers choose where to land their cables. Follow Europe’s example! Their wind farms come ashore in ports, major harbors or sparsely inhabited industrial areas – not in residential communities or environmentally fragile areas.