

To the Editor:

SouthCoast Wind has applied to RI DEM to dredge and lay high voltage electrical cables (345,000 volts) up the Sakonnet River, underground through Portsmouth, continuing through Mount Hope Bay to a grid connection at Brayton Point, MA. **Green Oceans is urging readers to email DEM (Ron.Gagnon@dem.ri.gov) by March 7th to oppose the permit.**

When the pogies go up the river with the stripers following them along, recreational fishermen cast their lines along the Sakonnet River. The fluke lie at the bottom and go up the river to spawn. What impact will this dredging have on the recreational fisherfolk, plus the swimmers, boaters, kayakers, sailors and all the people who have homes on both sides of the river or in the Portsmouth neighborhoods where the cable cuts underground to connect to Mount Hope Bay? And let's not forget the sea life!

We can only imagine what has been dumped into Narragansett Bay over the last 100 years by the jewelry, chemical and textile industries and the Navy. Heavy metal poisons have sunk to the ocean floor and should remain there. With this dredging, high pressure water plows will blast the sediment, spewing up pollutants toxic to aquatic life, damaging or destroying critical marine habitats including our beloved shellfish beds.

Electromagnetic fields (EMF's) emanating from buried cables are known to impact sea life, disrupting migration patterns, feeding and spawning behaviors. SouthCoast's own Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) states that EMF's will be detected if buried less than 10 feet deep. Yet they plan to bury the cables at depths ranging from 3.2 to 13 feet. In addition, cables heat up the seabed and surrounding water. Their DEIS says further studies need to be completed to accurately assess long-term impacts of the heat on surrounding ecosystems. Waves are powerful. Cables are going to rock and roll unless buried at 10 feet or more. What will the movement of the cables do to the seabed and to the marine life that make their homes nearby? So much uncertainty!

Cables require constant maintenance. Repairs will cause seabed disruption. Subsea cables make up just 10% of the initial cost of building an offshore wind farm but account for 75-80% of wind energy insurance claims. Cables contain Pipe-Type Cable Transmission Fluid (PTC) which wreaks havoc on the environment when leaked. There is no plan to contain or mitigate this hazard.

To learn more, check out our Green Oceans website. We are a 501(c)(3) group of concerned RI-based volunteers with no connection to the fossil fuel industry. Info displayed on our website is based on peer-reviewed scientific studies and the Environmental Impact Statements of the projects themselves. We're doctors, lawyers, engineers, realtors, artists, businesspeople, teachers, pilots, fisherfolk, gardeners, surfers and sailors who've banded together because our local elected officials, universities and conservation groups, many of whom have received massive grants and political donations from wind energy players, have rubber-stamped these projects without asking intelligent questions about whether they will in fact halt climate change and whether they will destroy our way of RI way of life.

Yours sincerely,
Barbara Chapman, Green-Oceans Trustee
Newport, RI