



Wind farms in danger

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Tags: [cape wind](#), [coast guard reauthorization act](#), [don young](#), [robert f. kennedy, jr.](#), [wind farms](#) [[list all tags](#)]

The TOD team was contacted by Greenpeace today regarding the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2005 (H.R. 889) introduced into Congress not long ago. Oddly enough (or not), Rep. Don Young (R-AK) included a provision in the bill that would block any wind farms from being built within 1.5 miles of any shipping lane.

From [the letter](#) that Greenpeace is asking people to forward to Congress:

The development of wind energy projects adjacent to shipping channels in other countries suggests that a 1.5 mile mandatory buffer is unnecessary. Denmark and the United Kingdom are currently the world leaders in offshore wind energy, and both countries require a site specific review of impacts on navigation for projects 1/3 of a mile or greater from a shipping channel...In fact, the Middlegrunden wind farm in Denmark is within 1/3 nautical miles of a shipping channel, and there have been no negative impacts on navigation as a result of the wind farm since it was installed in 2001. In addition, this provision is more restrictive than laws dealing with other offshore structures, including oil and gas platforms that can be located within 500 feet of shipping channels.

Obviously, such regulations will have a big impact on future planning for large scale wind-farms. More immediately, the passing of the Coast Guard Reauthorization bill with this language in it will shut down Cape Wind, which has received [a lot of press](#) due to the fact that Robert Kennedy, Jr (an NRDC lawyer) has [opposed the project](#) on the grounds that it will muck up the view of his precious Nantucket Sound. Yet, [Grist reports](#) that even Kennedy isn't stupid enough to support Young's proposal (I guess under the assumption that he'll get people to oppose Cape Wind while promoting wind power in other people's backyards). On the other hand, the [Boston Globe is speculating](#) that Young's amendment is a direct result of lobbying on behalf of the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound, "which spent more than \$800,000 over 3 1/2 years on federal lobbying against the project."

Considering that Don Young of Alaska doesn't seem to have an immediate stake in this issue, and it's not often that lawmakers think about potential future impact when formulating policy, it seems plausible that lobbyists have gotten to him. Projects like [Cape Wind](#) are important, and I think that anyone who is serious about developing alternative energy must weigh need over aesthetics (which does seem to be the predominant concern in the case of Cape Wind). Here's what the Cape Wind people [have to say](#):

After four years of favorable regulatory review showing the project would lower energy

costs, reduce air pollution and help wean the New England region off its dependence on imported oil and natural gas, Cape Wind's future is now threatened because of Alaska Congressman Don Young's backdoor attempt to kill America's first offshore wind farm.

Rep. Young's effort would also delay progress on the development of any other offshore wind proposals, causing the American renewable energy industry to fall further behind its foreign competitors.

If the Young Amendment were to pass it would deny New England the many benefits of the Cape Wind project including cleaner air, lower energy costs, increased energy independence, and more.

If you're not too jaded about the political process in the US, it's worth sending off the [Greenpeace letter](#) to Congress.



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