



## **STATEMENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SIERRA CLUB ON THE CAPE WIND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT, MAY 2006**

The Sierra Club encourages the development of renewable energy sources of low environmental impact to reduce our nation's dependency on fossil fuels which result in pollution, global climate changes and risks to national security associated with the country's overwhelming reliance on fossil fuels.

The Sierra Club recognizes that balancing our needs for clean renewable energy against preservation of the environment will often entail tradeoffs that lead to difficult choices. Today, the threats of global climate change and atmospheric pollution require that we move expeditiously toward the adoption of rigorous energy conservation programs and the development of appropriately-sited facilities for the production of energy from renewable sources. The Sierra Club will support specific projects to develop renewable energy that pose little or acceptably low risk to the environment. Currently, wind energy is the most practical and most readily available of the presently existing renewable energy technologies.

Cape Wind Associates proposes to construct 130 wind turbines over a 25-square-mile area of Nantucket Shoal in Nantucket Sound off Cape Cod. The project is expected to produce 170 megawatts of electricity annually, equivalent to approximately 75 percent of the current electricity usage for Cape Cod.

The Sierra Club has conducted a technical review and assessment of the Draft Environmental Impact Report on Cape Wind and has called for inclusion of additional information on key topics in a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, including a more complete analysis of avian and marine wildlife risk, an improved alternatives analysis, adoption of rigorous monitoring protocols for project construction and operation, and an analysis of the project's economic and social equity impacts.

Following a preliminary assessment of the Cape Wind project and a preliminary analysis of field data and scientific studies conducted by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, The Sierra Club has tentatively concluded that the project does not pose a significant ecological threat to birds, marine animals and marine habitat.

**The Sierra Club supports the Cape Wind Renewable Energy Project as currently proposed subject to the following conditions:**

- **Completion of the additional evaluations risks to birds, marine animals and marine habitats with a finding of no ecologically significant threat;**
- **Appropriate compensation to the U.S. Government and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for use of public waters; and**
- **Adoption of monitoring protocols and plans, overseen by an independent third party, for enforceable mitigation to be implemented in the case of unanticipated adverse impacts.**

The Sierra Club opposes out-of-process legislation or actions specifically directed against the Cape Wind project, including Alaskan Congressman Don Young's proposed amendment to a Coast Guard Reauthorization Bill that would give the Governor of Massachusetts veto power over the proposed wind farm in Nantucket Sound. The Sierra Club continues to call for the development of a comprehensive process and regulatory framework for the siting, leasing and permitting of offshore wind energy projects that allows public input and compensation to the U.S. and state governments for use of public waters.

*Adopted by the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee, April 2006*