

Federal Government to Reconsider SouthCoast Wind Permit, Seeks Pause in Nantucket's Appeal

Town welcomes shift in federal position as an opportunity to advance both climate goals and legal accountability.

NANTUCKET, MA, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Friday, August 29, the U.S. Department of Justice [asked a federal court](#) to pause Nantucket's appeal of the federal government's permitting of the SouthCoast Wind project while the government reconsiders the permit (Case No.: 1:25-cv-00906-TSC in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia).

The Town of Nantucket supports the federal government's motion as the Town has sought reconsideration to reinforce key federal environmental and preservation laws designed to protect historic communities, coastal ecosystems, and Tribal Nations. SouthCoast Wind is opposing the motion.

Following Nantucket's [direct request](#) to the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to address flaws in its permitting process, the Town appealed BOEM's decision to permit SouthCoast to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on March 27, 2025. The appeal alleges that BOEM violated federal environmental and cultural protection laws in approving the project without requiring the developer to properly mitigate its harms.

"Nantucket supports renewable energy and recognizes that proper permitting and policy making for wind energy development rests in the hands of the federal government," said Select Board member Brooke Mohr. "But the permitting for SouthCoast Wind failed to account for the significant harm the project will cause Nantucket, a federally designated National Historic Landmark. We welcome this opportunity for federal agencies to reevaluate their decision and correct course."

Greg Werkheiser, attorney at Cultural Heritage Partners, legal counsel to Nantucket, added: "This case illustrates the law of unintended consequences. If agencies shortcut environmental safeguards to fast-track green energy projects, they create a dangerous precedent that allows fossil fuel developers to do the same. The result is more—not less—environmental harm. Our position is simple: we must move swiftly toward clean energy while still honoring the rule of law and protecting vulnerable communities."

Nantucket's appeal contends that it is entirely possible to expedite alternative energy projects while complying with environmental regulations—so long as developers do not ask American communities and Tribal Nations to shoulder the biggest risks of harm from the projects.

Nantucket offered SouthCoast Wind's developer multiple opportunities to address the island's concerns prior to litigation. Instead, the company relied on BOEM to shield it from accountability to affected communities, according to the Town's appeal. For example, during the permitting process, when Nantucket requested meaningful assistance in addressing the threat of billions of dollars in potential losses to its maritime and heritage tourism-based economy from the decades-long industrialization of its coast, the company's response was to offer a consultant-written report documenting the island's historic setting. Now, in its filing opposing the federal government's request for reconsideration, SouthCoast claims that any delay to more carefully evaluate impacts to Nantucket could cost it "hundreds of millions" of dollars. This response, Nantucket argues, exemplifies the imbalance of risk perpetuated by flawed permitting: communities bear the consequences, while developers expect expedited approval with limited accountability.

In its court filing, the federal government argues that continuing Nantucket's lawsuit "makes little sense" while the permit is under reconsideration—the outcome Nantucket has long requested. The Department of Justice expects to formally move for reconsideration of the permit before September 18.

If the government's motions are denied, Nantucket's appeal will proceed and the Town will continue its efforts to safeguard Nantucket's historic, cultural, and environmental resources and the rule of law.

SouthCoast Wind is one of nine wind farms proposed for the waters surrounding Nantucket. Combined, an estimated 743 turbines, three times the height of the Statue of Liberty, will occupy the island's Atlantic viewshed for at least 30 years. In the event of mechanical failure like the turbine blade incident in 2024, debris from the turbines could pollute local waters and beaches, harming ocean life, residents, and economies.

The public may visit the Town's [offshore wind webpages](#) for regular updates.

About the Town of Nantucket

Nantucket is a 14-mile-long, 3.5-mile-wide island located 30 miles off Cape Cod. Renowned for its preserved maritime history, preserved colonial-era architecture, and stunning natural beauty, over 50% of the island's land is protected for conservation, including 82 miles of public beaches. Nantucket, together with neighboring Tuckernuck and Muskeget, comprises the Nantucket Historic District, a National Historic Landmark—the highest federal recognition for cultural significance. Visit <https://www.nantucket-ma.gov>.

About SouthCoast Wind

SouthCoast Wind (formerly Mayflower Wind) is being developed by Ocean Winds North America (a joint venture between EDPR and ENGIE) in U.S. federal waters south of Nantucket in a lease area covering 127,388 acres with up to 141 wind turbine generators and five substation platforms. BOEM approved the project's permit in January 2025.

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