



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 13, 2016

## America's First Offshore Wind Farm Blows Up Controversy

The United States' first offshore wind farm is going to cost about \$17,600 per home it will power. Private investors will turn a profit, and government officials can pat themselves on the back for having done something to combat "climate change." But the owners of those homes, some of whom are already paying among the highest power rates in the nation, will end up shelling out nearly twice as much as the average American for this "green" electricity.



Deepwater Wind, a private energy firm, put the finishing touches on the Block Island Wind Farm in August. The five wind turbines, each 600 feet tall, were installed in the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of Block Island, a 10-square-mile cay situated 13 miles south of the Rhode Island mainland. The turbines are expected to begin generating electricity in November.

Although the wind farm was privately financed, it couldn't have been completed without the assistance of various government officials. The Obama administration, as part of its plan to have enough offshore wind farms to power 23 million homes by 2050, has issued "nearly a dozen commercial offshore wind leases," among them the one for Block Island, according to the [Hartford Courant](#). The administration also presented Rhode Island with a \$22.3-million "stimulus" grant in 2010 for improvements at Quonset Point, among them "much needed infrastructure improvements ... to support Deepwater Wind's plans to construct the" wind farm, a [press release](#) from then-Governor Donald Carcieri stated. Carcieri, whose former chief of staff Jeffrey Grybowski is the CEO of Deepwater, was a major proponent of the project. In addition, reported [Rhode Island Public Radio](#), critics charge that "the General Assembly sped through the regulatory process for the project and the company behind it."

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Block Islanders have other objections to the wind farm. For one thing, the turbines aren't exactly things of beauty.

"We certainly don't appreciate the turbines ruining the view our family has had for nearly 100 years," Rosemarie Ives, one of the island's roughly 1,000 residents, told the *Courant*.

Neither did the residents of Martha's Vineyard, which is why a proposed wind farm there was scuttled. When the Kennedy family doesn't want wind turbines ruining their view, those turbines won't appear no matter how much they are supposed to benefit the Earth.

The folks on Block Island, however, have no such political influence, so their view must be obstructed.

It's not as though they are happy about their current situation, in which they get their power from somewhat unreliable diesel generators and pay some of the highest rates in the country. Block Island Grocery owner Mary Jane Baber told the *Courant* that she's been trying for years to get grants to connect the island to the mainland power grid, to no avail. Yet when a politically connected corporation wanted to build a politically correct power generator near the island, suddenly the grants and permits just poured in.



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Block Island is slated eventually to get a mainland grid connection as part of the project, but that will only add to its cost, already at \$300 million, or about \$17,600 for each of the 17,000 homes it is expected to power. But even when that arrives, it is unlikely to help bring down power rates on the island. Deepwater negotiated a 20-year contract with regional utility National Grid in which it receives about 24 cents per kilowatt hour — the national average is 12.3 cents — with guaranteed increases over time. Wrote the *Courant*, “That means Rhode Islanders will pay more for power to subsidize a project benefiting Deepwater’s private investors, Balsler said.”

Those in thrall to the idea of saving the planet from “climate change,” on the other hand, have no such concerns. Higher energy costs for some people today are, they believe, simply the cost of preventing global temperatures from rising.

“The benefit is long term for society in general, not necessarily for the place where the turbines are,” Cristina Archer, a professor in the College of Earth, Ocean and Environment at the University of Delaware, told the *Courant*.

But as Balsler put it, “It’s not benefiting Block Island. It’s not benefiting Rhode Island. The notoriety of being the first in the nation? Can I take that home and eat it?”

On the other hand, Deepwater CEO Grybowski had a point when he told Rhode Island Public Radio that “the need for new energy sources is underscored by the retirement of the coal-fired plants that traditionally supplied New England’s electricity.” Many of those plants, however, are being closed because of the Obama administration’s [war on coal](#).

Indeed, politics, rather than necessity, seem to be the driving force behind the push for offshore wind farms. Left-wing politicians are leading the charge for “renewable” power sources, and private firms are only too happy to rake in the profits by getting on the bandwagon. And the problem isn’t just coming from Washington. According to the *Courant*, “This month, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker signed a law requiring utilities to buy a combined 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind power in coming years. In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo wants half the state’s power to come from renewable energy sources by 2030, a plan backed by the state’s Department of Public Utilities.” Deepwater hopes to build over 200 turbines off the New England coast, including 15 near Long Island, to meet these politically imposed objectives.

While American politicians are leading the charge for more offshore wind farms, European countries, which have had such farms for some time, are finding that they aren’t such a good idea. Wind farms, whether on land or at sea, depend on air currents that naturally fluctuate, and thus they do not generate a constant amount of electricity, which can damage the power grid. Moreover, building and maintaining offshore wind farms is difficult and expensive. Put it all together and you have a recipe for high energy rates and unreliable power supplies.

Germany, which has a large number of offshore wind farms, “now has electric rates for consumers that are among the highest in the world,” Myron Ebell, director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, told the [Daily Caller](#). Berlin plans to cut back on wind energy and has been paying consumers to use excess power and wind farms not to generate it.

Even the U.S. government recognizes that wind power is a bad idea. The *Daily Caller* reports: “The U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is currently investigating how green energy undermines the reliability of the electrical grid. FERC believe there is a ‘significant risk’ of electricity in the United States becoming unreliable because ‘wind and solar don’t offer the services the shuttered



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coal plants provided.’”

But don't expect such facts to get in the way of the wind-farm frenzy. The Germans know the negative effects of wind power and even recognize that it isn't doing anything to reduce their carbon emissions, yet their government estimates that it will spend over \$1.1 trillion subsidizing it nonetheless. Is it possible that the renewable-energy push, and the environmental agenda in general, have [little to do with saving the planet and much to do with achieving global socialism?](#)



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